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THE COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE.

THE great French theatre whose company is just about to visit us is distinguished from any English theatre of the present day by this noteworthy fact—that it has a history and a character. Not one of our London playhouses, with the exception of Drury Lane (which would seem to have lost all dramatic value), can in any degree rival the two hundred years' history of the Comédie Française; nor, though the leading features of some of them—of the Prince of Wales's, notably—are sufficiently marked, are they ever very long lived. We are never sure that a year or two may not revolutionise a theatre; indeed, the only house whose specialty has fairly outlasted a generation is the Haymarket, home of the larger type of comedy.

The one permanent characteristic of the Théâtre Français has seldom been more pronounced than it is at the present moment—except perhaps when, two centuries ago, the *troupe* had its first legal establishment; yet, though constantly claimed by the French as a national trait, it is one which hardly any ordinary Englishman would think of ascribing to them. This is good sense—*le bon sens français*; though, as the term is rather applied to literature and art than to practical life, and is

used in the sense of correctness, logic, moderation, the more exact expression might be *le bon goût*—cultivated, measured, almost perfect taste. This quality indeed, with hardly a disturbing element until the recent extravagances of Hugo and of Feuillet, has reigned at the Comédie Française throughout its long history—from Molière to Augier.

The briefest sketch of that history will show how persistent has been this quality, while it may also suggest the reason of its interruption; and as a sketch that should give within the narrow limits of a magazine article an account of the Comédie Française past and present must be brief indeed, this is fortunate.

The national French theatre was first definitely constituted, under its great founder, in 1680, though it did not assume its present title till nine years later; but a long and arduous struggle for Molière and his company had preceded their attainment of this position, this crown of all their labours.

Love for an actress (Armande Béjart, whom later he married) had, it is said, induced Molière to join a *troupe* of strolling players, and for thirteen years he had travelled in the provinces, gradually rising to be manager of his

company, which soon eclipsed all its rivals. Playing at first in tragedy, afterwards in comedy, and writing a few of the extravagant farces which preluded the *Précieuses Ridicules* and the *Ecole des Maris*, Molière was held by country audiences to have fairly won his spurs; but Paris—now under the sway of three powerful companies—was an untried and dangerous field. There the tragedies of Corneille were played under the superintendence of the master, now past his prime, by the actors of the Hôtel de Bourgogne; spectacular pieces were produced with much magnificence by the *Comédiens du Marais*; and a *troupe* of Italians played their national *commedia dell' arte* with constant success.

Against these our little band of unknown country actors had to struggle; nor does it seem likely that, meeting his rivals on their own ground, Molière would have been able to maintain his position against them—it was not over-easy even to obtain the royal sanction for the establishment of another theatre in Paris. However, after his company (with himself in the principal part) had performed before the king with fair success the tragedy of *Nicomède*, Molière, in a speech of ingenious humility, asked leave to supplement their 'feeble copy of excellent originals' with a little pleasantry of their own: a farce called *Le Docteur Amoureux*, which has not been preserved. This at once took the fancy of the Court, and Molière's company forthwith received the royal license.

Even then it was nearly five years before Paris was fairly won. The *répertoire* of the company was very limited—Corneille's tragedies and a few comedies of Scarron, which the audience knew

by heart, made up the greater part of it, and the 'share' of each actor after a night's performance was sometimes scarcely more than a few pence. It was in vain that Molière threw his heart and soul into the worn-out tragedies of the day; only some of the absurd farces which had made the country-folks laugh pleased the good people of Paris. Even within his company there was danger; the rival actors of the Hôtel de Bourgogne and the Marais tried to sow dissension among the new-comers—but in vain, for Molière was not only admired and respected, but heartily loved.

At last, however, a happy satire—the *Précieuses Ridicules*—drew all Paris to the Petit Bourbon, and after this one hit all was plain-sailing. In spite of jealousy, and of the enemies made by his unsparing wit, Molière's masterpieces won him triumph after triumph; the *Misanthrope*, the *Tartuffe*, the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* were the talk of Paris then, as they have since been the pride of France; and one cannot but wonder at the perseverance and spirit which rapidly produced them, amid all the labours of acting and of management, and amid constant and bitter domestic trouble.

When one looks at the splendid statue of Molière in the *foyer* of the Comédie Française, one can partly understand the mind and heart from which those great satires came. The French take the *Misanthrope* as many of us take *Hamlet*—they look upon it as the expression of what was most characteristic of its author's mind: as, not improbably, a portrait of himself, from a certain sardonic point of view. Good sense, good taste, are the very essence of this comedy; the falsehood of courtly manners is laid

bare, while yet the futility of individual revolt against universal custom is shown. The keen sensitive face of Molière needed no mask for the part of Alceste; nor was the brilliant, hard, good sense of the coquette Célimène a mere assumption to Armande Béjart, Molière's beautiful and faithless wife. That the form of these classical comedies is undramatic and narrow needs not to be said; the essential fact is that they are an exact and logical statement of the spirit of their time, that their strength is that of the best sense and taste of the day, as interpreted by Molière.

Yet one must qualify the verdict of French critics upon *Le Misanthrope*; one must allow that their praise of its common sense leaves common sense behind. M. Hippolyte Lucas, for example, tells us that 'what Homer did for the heroic songs of Greece, and Dante for the Catholic traditions of the Middle Ages, this did Molière for the universal precepts of reason.' Such a comparison is surely absurd; indeed, many Englishmen would be inclined to say that Molière was at his greatest in pure broad farce—as that of the *Mariage Forcé*—in which, if he have any rival, Aristophanes is the only one. The mere collocation of the names of *Hamlet* and the *Misanthrope* must have struck many readers as ridiculous; indeed, I can scarcely conceive that any English spectator of this play, with which the Comédie Française commences its season at the Gaiety (acting it with every conventionality unmodified, with gestures and almost tones which have descended from Molière), will fail to find in it a lack of force and variety, a commonplaceness pervading much of the common sense, a flatness throughout contrasting most un-

favourably with the full vigour not only of Shakespeare, Congreve, or Goldsmith, but even of Sheridan in his masterpiece, the *School for Scandal*, imitated in part from this very play.

But to turn from Molière to his company, and its final triumph. In 1680 Louis XIV. united in one theatre the *troupes* which had hitherto been rivals, and gave them the exclusive right of playing tragedies and comedies in Paris—a privilege which their successors struggled hard, but vainly, to retain. A legal form of association was drawn up, and Louis allowed them 1200 livres a year—since, by degrees, increased to 240,000 francs (9600*l.*). Ground was bought whereon to build a theatre; but this was not the present site, to which the company did not remove till a hundred years later (1789); and the contributions to the expense to be made by each actor were decided upon; as also the manner of reimbursement to him or his heirs, and the payments of new members. There were twenty-three full shares, each of 8750 livres 15 sols 5 deniers; but it must be remembered that in those days the *livre française* was a coin of value even less than that of the 'pund Scots.' Half-shares and quarter-shares might be held; and this arrangement still continues—when an actor is elected a *sociétaire* of the company, he receives at least a quarter-share of the profits, to which a further eighth of a share is added after two years.

The great name which follows that of Molière in the annals of the Théâtre Français is that of Racine, who may be roughly said to hold the same position when compared with Corneille that Pope holds to Dryden. It is the rarest thing for an Englishman to appre-

ciate the charm of this writer; even Frenchmen, indeed, call him—like claret—*un goût acquis*. He is the poet of correctness—a title which means with him, as it did with Pope, merely the poet of care. His Greek tragedies are one vast anachronism, although it would seem that the extraordinary genius of Rachel infused into them something of a Greek spirit. Both the *Phèdre* and the *Andromaque*, which are to be played at the Gaiety, will be interesting, as Mdlle. Sarah Bernhardt is to appear as their heroines; but it is probable that their author's pleasant farce, *Les Plaideurs*, with Got, Delaunay, and Coquelin, will be more frankly enjoyed.

Corneille, Molière, and Racine—these three names filled the great classical period of French dramatic literature; but before Racine's death, had appeared a young writer of comedy, whose masterpiece still holds the stage—Regnard, frankly, carelessly, hopelessly immoral, yet the writer of the *Joueur*, which suggested the gloomy and powerful English tragedy, the *Gamester*. Messieurs Delaunay, Coquelin, Coquelin *cadet*, and the charming Mdlle. Broisat will appear in this piece at the Gaiety, and the performance will probably be among the most interesting of the classical *répertoire*. With Regnard's death there came to the front Marivaux, an artificial but delightful writer, whose still popular *Jeux de l'Amour et du Hasard* is not, I regret to notice, to be performed in England, where this exquisitely refined comedy would have had a double interest—first, from the splendid and most classical performance of M. Coquelin, unquestioned prince of stage-valets; and next, from the comparison between this the original, and the well-known two-act farce, *Check-mate*, adapted from it by Andrew

Halliday. The immense superiority in style of the comedy of Marivaux is worth more than bare recognition.

Of this period was Baron, actor and dramatist, a pupil of Molière. In his plays he studied from himself the fatuity of 'ladies' men;' he was, we are told, 'spoilt by the duchesses of the day.' Was it a real event, or only a possibility, which he recorded in the scene of *L'Homme à bonnes Fortunes*, in which two women recognise on each other their own presents to their lover?

In the writers of this time we notice already the beginning of the change from the reign of the *noblesse* to that of the *bourgeoisie*; a natural step, one might say, in the path of common sense. Yet it must be confessed that at this period the morals of the French stage were at their very worst; and it does not need English prudery to find in them continual offences against good taste, in any sense of the word.

The second great period of the French theatre is, of course, that of Voltaire, who fills three-quarters of the eighteenth century, and in whom is strongly felt the commencement of that English influence which in varying forms continues through Diderot and Sédaine to Victor Hugo and even Alfred de Musset. Shakespeare was the potent spirit whose essence Voltaire strove to transfuse into the form of Racine; and though the narrow common sense of the French philosopher was shocked at the daring of the English poet, and fell into absurdities which his imagination easily overstepped, the influence was on the whole a good one. Voltaire may be individually inferior to Racine as a dramatist, but he marks the approach of a greater period; though he smells vulgarity in the strong men and

women of Shakespeare, he helps to take down from their stilts the kings and queens of Corneille. His *Zaïre*, in which Mdlle. Bernhardt and Mounet-Sully will appear at the Gaiety, was intended to show how Shakespeare ought to have written *Othello*; and though from this point of view a failure, it is—especially in its earlier acts—a bright and interesting drama.

In the reign of Voltaire lived two of the greatest of French actors—Le Kain and Mdlle. Clairon, whom I notice here especially as carrying on the progress of common sense in one matter of some importance. While Garrick was yet dressing Macbeth like an officer in the Guards, these his contemporaries had given some sort of correctness to the costumes of their stage. It was in 1759, in the *Orphelin de la Chine* of Voltaire, that this reform was first attempted; and the experiment was at once successful, partly, perhaps, because it did not go too far. It was more in cut than in materials that the Greek or barbarian costumes of the stage departed from the fashions of Louis XV., as may be inferred from the manner by which Philoctetes was 'dressed' in Bellecour. That unhappy warrior wore a *soubreveste* of rose-coloured satin, a satin mantle of a deep red, flowered with gold and lined with 'tiger-striped' satin, and a hat adorned with ostrich feathers, which was girt with a diadem *qui se rattachait à un muyle de lion*; his hair rose in curls over his ears and in a chignon behind his head, and he carried a gilt bow and gilt arrows. This was the sort of thing which Voltaire appreciated.

Barely mentioning Piron, I will pass to younger contemporaries of Voltaire who were on the whole curiously unlike him. With Diderot and Sédaine we are among

middle-class men and women, acting, speaking, and suffering as ourselves. The *Père de Famille* of the former and the *Philosophe sans le Savoir* of the latter are as homely as the modern English school of comedy. The *Philosophe*, indeed,—an attack on the immorality of the duel,—is one of the most marked instances of the progress of common sense we shall find in the history of the French theatre. The play has been preserved to our day chiefly by the fresh and charming character of the young girl Victorine, for whose sake George Sand wrote a sequel to the comedy, which—having the exceptional fate of being more popular than the original piece—is to be performed at the Gaiety, though not with a very strong 'cast.'

It would be too long a task to show here the political importance of the stage in France during this latter half of the eighteenth century; but it was indeed a kind of forum, where all questions of public interest had some sort of hearing. That 'the Revolution began in the comedies of Beaumarchais' has been said so often, that English spectators are astonished to find in the *Mariage de Figaro* and its predecessor only merry plays of intrigue, with a minimum of philosophical disquisition; but during the Revolution itself there was a constant succession of *à propos* pieces, which held up the mirror to a singularly ugly series of faces on both sides. That throughout this period the Comédie Française produced very few violent plays—for neither *Charles IX.* nor the even more famous *Ami des Lois* is in any way extreme—proves, I think, how thoroughly moderation was a tradition of the house. The great Talma was an energetic Republican, but not, I believe, anything like a *montagnard*; and the mildly reactionary party in the

company was so strong that a split ensued, and in the sequel the conservative half was sent to prison, and there remained for some months.

But, apart from politics, the comedy and prose-drama of the Française had, as I have tried to show, grown and changed very greatly since the classical days; while the English influence, not only of Shakespeare, but of our eighteenth-century writers of 'domestic drama,' had greatly affected—I may perhaps say *humanised*—French playwrights of these schools. Tragedy alone did not develop; it became only, as people say, 'more so.' Parisian good taste, then in one of its most artificial stages, grew more and more fastidious, insisted more and more rigorously on the observance of rules laid down by the great masters, which worthy successors would have been the first to break. The broad good sense of imagination was absent, and the narrow good sense which works logically from premises it has not the strength to test grew yearly more tyrannical in its sway. When it had become unendurable Victor Hugo arose.

I do not carry my theory so far as to uphold Hugo as an example of the *bon sens français* because he set himself to oppose stupid conventionalities; he was no doubt an exception to the normal good taste of the 'house of Molière.' I only wish to point out the reason for this exception: the rule of narrow correctness had been carried too far, and it was natural that the reaction should go to the opposite extreme. *Hernani*, *Marion Delorme*, *Marie Tudor*, contain much that is absurd, much that is thoroughly vulgar and revolting; but they have a dramatic strength and reality, with an ease of expression and a freedom of

metrical form, undreamt of by Racine or Voltaire. Viewed by themselves, as works of art, they may be inexcusable; but compared with their predecessors they are a very welcome change. *Ruy Blas*, indeed, is in its way really fine—one might call it the perfection of melodrama: it has thoroughly borne the test of translation into every language, and one cannot but hope that it may be performed at the Gaiety, when the much inferior *Hernani* is to be given four times.

The story of the struggle between the classic and the romantic schools of French drama has been told so often—with its riots, its absurdities, its exaggerations—that there can be no need to repeat it. That its result was, on the whole, favourable to the romantic side, is also known; it became quite a matter of course for a heroine to address her lover as *son lion, superbe et généreux*, and for a dramatist to break up a little the monotonous cesura of classic French verse. One point, however, deserves notice. Although in the present day we take for granted our *Ruy Blas* and *Hernani* at the Français, one is somewhat surprised to find that this conservative theatre gave the romantic drama its first trial; that *Hernani* was produced there, in the teeth of tradition, all but fifty years ago—on the 25th of February 1830. The reason which the reader of plays to the theatre gave for recommending its production was certainly a sufficiently odd one; he considered it (he said) 'a tissue of extravagances,' but thought it would be well to perform it, that the public might see how far the human mind could go astray if common sense and taste were disregarded!*

* With *Dofia Sol* and *Marie Tudor* the names of *Milles*, *Mars* and *Georges* are

Hugo still lives and succeeds, but two of his most successful contemporaries, Scribe and Delavigne, have fallen into that curious temporary oblivion which awaits the celebrities of time just past. In Scribe, artificial though he be, one finds to a high degree the finish and balance, the charm and grace, distinctive of the French. In thorough knowledge of the stage almost every other dramatist yields to him; and it is a matter of regret that in the coming season the Comédie Française purposes to give us no example of a real, if not a great, master of his art. For Delavigne, I will only note in passing his tact and fine sense, as shown especially in the *Ecole des Vicillards*, a story of an unequal marriage.

It is a strange fact that in the earlier part of the decade, 1830-40, during the *débuts* of Victor Hugo and the prime of Scribe and Delavigne, the fortunes of the Comédie Française were at a lower ebb than ever before or since. In the whole of 1831 the theatre hardly took 12,000*l.*, and one night *Tartuffe* and *Le Legs* were performed to a house holding less than three pounds! In a word, the nightly receipts did not average 33*l.*, and with so large and powerful a company as was needed for their *répertoire* this must have been altogether insufficient. Despite the Government subvention of 200,000 francs, the theatre had in 1833 nearly 600,000 francs of debt;

nor—to anticipate a little—was this altogether cleared off till some fifteen years later, when the Government of Louis Philippe came to the rescue with a loan of 300,000 francs.

But long before this latter date had happened one of the great events in the history of the French theatre—the appearance of Rachel. On the 12th of June 1838, before a house not one-eighth full, this Jewish girl of seventeen made her *début* as Camille in the *Horaces* of Corneille; in the autumn of the same year she played, to houses densely crowded, all the heroines of the great classical tragedies, already beyond dispute the supreme genius of the French stage—more than our Siddons, more than their Le Kain or Talma. ‘All the heroines,’ I have said—but with one exception, and that probably the part in which she was most unrivalled: it was not till nearly five years later that she made imperishably her own the *Phèdre* of Racine. There seems to have been an almost unearthly exaltation in the presence and the voice of Rachel, which saved from any touch of realism the unholy passion to which the terrible woman of Greek story was a prey. There was little humanity about Rachel, little of the warmth of every-day affection; one cannot imagine her indulging in the realistic tears and hugs of the present drama, and, as a fact, she was greatly successful in but one non-classical piece—*Adrienne Lecouvreur*. She was pure poetry, pure passion, a statue, a flash of lightning; of all geniuses, we can the least expect to see her like again.

One detail as to her career is, in these dreadful days of long runs, very notable: she never played any one part a hundred times. Of the forty-four characters in which she appeared, Andromaque was the

imperishably connected. These two actresses were, with the great Talma, the chief favourites of Napoleon I., who was deeply interested in the stage, and especially in the tragedies of Corneille. At Moscow even, when his power was tottering to its terrible fall, he gave time and thought to the drawing up of a code of no less than 101 articles for the regulation of the Comédie Française, of which the chief provisions are still in force, although at the Restoration the code itself was nominally annulled.

one she played most frequently—viz. ninety-nine times; Phèdre came second, with seventy-four; in *Polyeucte* she acted seventy-one times, and in *Adrienne Lecouvreur* sixty-nine. On an average, she played a part about twenty-five times, in her career of seventeen years (from the 12th June 1838 to the 23d July 1855).

After Rachel, even the names of Arnould-Plessy, of Geffroy, and of Regnier—still connected with the Français and the Conservatoire—lose interest, brilliant though in themselves they be; but before I come to the celebrities of to-day I must note the brief and splendid career of the most poetical of French poets, Alfred de Musset, whose *proverbs* are almost an epoch in stage history. The exquisite taste of which I have so often spoken finds its purest expression in these day-dreams; there is perhaps nothing in dramatic literature parallel to the sad fantasy which he has called *Une Nuit d'Octobre*. Venice—the poet's Venice, that 'never was on sea or land'—lives again in his caprices, his sleepless nights. Of dramatic construction there is hardly a trace in these reveries, these quiet idylls of the feverish town; they begin, and go on, and end, somehow—but they are like real dreams; it is quite a chance when one wakes. Would that there were an opportunity for such dreams in the present English theatre!

And now to turn to the writers of to-day. I will leave on one side the so-called philosophy of M. Dumas *filz*—if it is worth discussing at all, it is worth discussing at greater length than would here be possible—and the so-called realism of M. Feuillet. Both are well represented in the English performances. Of M. Dumas we are to have (twice)

L'Etrangère—absurdly misrepresented at the Haymarket some years ago—in which Mdlle. Bernhardt will again deliver the famous speech; Mdlle. Croizette and MM. Coquelin and Febvre will give us the *parvenue* duchess, the *vibrion*, and the admirable Yankee; and Madame Madeleine Brohan will lend her unrivalled charm of sweetness and placid dignity to a very small part. We have also this author's *Fils Naturel* (twice) and his celebrated *Demi-Monde*, in which Mdlle. Croizette is brilliant, characteristic, and powerful as in hardly any other part; M. Febvre is full of manliness and feeling; M. Delaunay is almost too vivacious; and the exquisite simplicity and girlish charm of Mdlle. Broisat shine at their brightest against a dark and unpleasant background.

Of M. Feuillet we have *Le Village*, and (three times) the notorious *Sphinx*, in which Mdlle. Croizette will show—hardly perhaps in the strictest accordance with the *bon goût* aforesaid—how realistically even a pretty woman can render the death-agony, if she chooses.

Dumas and Feuillet, then, set aside, let us look at the great typical writer of the Français of to-day—M. Emile Augier. Thoroughly to appreciate the power of this dramatist, one ought to see those studies of society, *Les Effrontés* and *Le Fils de Giboyer*—in the former especially there is a largeness, a dignity, almost Elizabethan. In his vigorous prose, his strong but not prudish morality, his study of character and avoidance of caricature, M. Augier is a noble model for English dramatists. It is perhaps a pity that we shall see him only in his *Fourchambault* (apparently not a first-rate work, though it will be interesting for the sake of

comparison with its English adaptation, the *Crisis*), his *Gendre de M. Poirier*—charming as it is—and a slight comediotta. Of course, one understands that the Comédie could not be expected to rehearse a heavy piece like *Les Effrontés* for a single performance; but one regrets its absence.

With the keen sense of Molière we began, with the steady sense of Augier we end, this sketch of French dramatists. Turning to the actors, we find at the head of the present *troupe* a remarkable example of our theory. M. Got is common sense embodied. He is not remarkably funny, his pathos is rather good than great, he is always very much alike; but he is an actor so solid, of such thorough intelligence and cultivation, so artistic and so sincere, that he wins universal respect and liking. During his stay in England he will be seen in nearly all his very best parts, except Giboyer—a character which, one would think, must die with him—and the proud and poor Duc Job. His M. Poirier is already known here, but I am almost inclined to prefer to it the good old Jewish priest in *L'Ami Fritz*—a pastoral surely never excelled in quiet beauty and completeness on any stage. He plays, too, Regnier's great part in *La Joie fait Peur*, and shows us again how different from Charles Mathews it is possible to be in *Mercadet* (*A Game of Speculation*). Finally, he gives his original—and perhaps most famous—creation, the Abbé, in *Il ne faut jurer de Rien*; he plays many parts in classical comedy; and he enters into a friendly rivalry with our admirable actor, Mr. Charles Kelly, in his part in the *Fourchambault*.

Next to the name of Got has stood for many years that of Delaunay, most famous among

lovers—the 'silver-tongued Barry' of our day. We shall not see him as the poet—the Alfred de Musset!—of the *Nuit d'Octobre*, nor as the boyish Horace of the *Ecole des Femmes*, two of his greatest parts; but the selection of plays in which he appears leaves very little to regret. Above all, the three young heroes of De Musset—Perdican, Valentin, and the reckless Octave—will find their fittest representative in him. In Augier and in Dumas *fils* M. Delaunay seems somehow out of place; it is the every-day world, and he is not of it. He appears artificial, too much given to posing, his inflections are too elaborately varied; perhaps, also, there is a certain want of human nature in him—and this last fault makes it impossible for him to sound the depths of the part in which, unfortunately, he will first be seen—Alceste, the Misanthrope. But in the creations of De Musset his sweet voice makes perfect the charm of the sad youthful poetry, and in the lighter parts of classical comedy the *verve*, the boyish restlessness and recklessness, and, throughout all, the finished art of his playing, are indescribable and unrivalled.

Intelligence and mastery of his art are the leading characteristics of the third among the *sociétaires* of this singularly homogeneous company; but M. Coquelin is one of those men whose greatest ill-luck it has been to be too lucky. He has obtained such a position in the first theatre in Europe that he plays (apparently) whatever parts he likes, whether or not he be naturally fitted for them. As what is technically called a 'low comedian'—in the valets of old comedy, above all—it is scarcely too much to say that he is absolutely perfect; but when he is in Paris it is comparatively seldom

that he appears in this his true line. With an ambition which one hardly likes to blame, he tries to make us forget, in poetical parts, his comic face, his natural advantages for valets and drolls; and, as was to be expected, it is at best a *succès d'estime* which he obtains. In really serious parts he is timid, and consequently commonplace; and in what is called 'character' acting he cannot stand for a moment against the numberless brilliant comedians of the English stage.

But, most fortunately, we are this summer to have many opportunities of seeing him in the parts in which he has no living rival. In Mascarille, Figaro, Petit-Jean, a dozen other characters, his drollery is superb; he has the confidence of a thorough artist; he commands our frankest laughter without the slightest loss of self-respect; he gives to low-comedy a dash and brilliancy of life that make it more akin to poetry than his most ambitious attempts in higher paths.

What qualities are more characteristic of M. Frédéric Febvre than good sense and good taste? A straightforward and manly actor of a thoroughly good school, he is invaluable to his company in such parts as Clarkson (in *L'Etrangère*), De Nanjac (in the *Demi-Monde*), and others, for which quiet strength is the great requisite. In such a character as that of the hero of *Marcel*, where actual passion is needed, he fails; but repose and dignity are no mean qualities, and these—together with an individuality rare among French actors—M. Febvre possesses in a high degree.

And now for two actors altogether unlike their fellows—M. Mounet-Sully and M. Coquelin cadet. The former of these has a glorious voice, a handsome face,

and a fine presence; but it was feared until quite recently that he would throw away these gifts from a mere want of discretion in their use: he carried everything—facial expression, action, and declamation—to a pitch of violence rare indeed at the Comédie Française. Fortunately, it is said that in the last new part which he has undertaken, Ruy Blas, he has gained immensely in moderation, and—as naturally follows—in effect. Unfortunately, it is not yet certain whether we shall see him in this character, or only in *Hernani*, in which his old faults were yet unconquered, and in the heroes of classical tragedy, where they were singularly out of place. With or without his faults, however, M. Sully is the only possible tragedian on the French stage.

M. Coquelin cadet the younger was at first by no means successful in his attempts to follow in the footsteps of his brother, and even now there is no sort of comparison between them in the parts where the elder is at his best. But Coquelin cadet is to some extent the black swan of the French stage—a character-actor. Undoubtedly the most brilliant thing in *L'Ami Fritz* is his intensely appreciative rendering of the eager, greedy Frédéric (so admirably thrown into relief by the comfortable Hanezo of M. Barré); and the one most exquisite and original sketch that I remember to have seen at the Français was his *Mari qui pleure*—a 'funny man,' with whom, as in all funny men of the better type, tears were almost as near the surface as laughter. But, alas, the *Mari qui pleure* (M. Jules Prével's first comedy) is not to be given at the Gaiety.

And before I turn to some short notice of the leading actresses of the Français, I should like to say a word as to the selection and

casting of the smaller pieces to be played by the company this June. For some of these—*La Joie fait Peur* particularly—I have nothing but praise; but there are faults of omission and commission that call for criticism. Surely a place ought to have been found for the *Nuit d'Octobre* and the *Passant*, whatever else was omitted; and, still more surely, it was unwise to peril the reputation of the Français for such little masterpieces by offering the *Village* and *Chez l'Avocat* inadequately cast. Without entering into any comparison between Madame Agar and Mrs. Bancroft, I may say that it is questionable whether at the Comédie Française *Le Village* could ever be played as well as it was (under the title of the *Vicarage*) at the Prince of Wales's, by the manageress, Mr. Cecil, and Mr. Kendal; but with MM. Barré and Garraud comparison becomes impossible. Similarly, that *Chez l'Avocat*, with which is associated the name of Sarah Bernhardt, should depend upon Mdlle. Samary and MM. Boucher and Joliet to rival the admirable miniatures of the Prince of Wales's and the Court, must be a grave mistake.

Of the actresses of the Comédie Française, and of French actresses generally as contrasted with English, one might say much. I will confine myself to pointing out that, while in women of genius the modern French theatre is probably no richer than ours, its average is yet beyond comparison higher. The 'walking ladies' of the Français are invariably good—intelligent, graceful, and with voices whose sweetness makes the harsh uncultivated tones of our ordinary actresses seem dissonant indeed. But of the twelve *sociétaires* of the theatre I can now speak only of four, leaving with-

out addition even the few lines already given to the refinement and charm of Madame Brohan and the exquisite grace of Mdlle. Broisat—an *ingénue* far more simple and unaffected than the celebrated Reichemberg.

The most famous actress in the company—Mdlle. Sarah Bernhardt—has, it is well known, other claims upon our interest than her dramatic powers. She is a sculptor of distinguished merit; she has written a book of poems—*Nuages* they are called, and the name is sufficiently appropriate to make it unkind to dwell longer upon them; she is a musician, and a beautiful woman; 'and,' a Parisian critic would probably add, 'she goes up in balloons.' In a word, Mdlle. Bernhardt is always doing something—she is always *en évidence*; the public are never allowed to forget her—a fault, perhaps, but a matter in no way affecting her merits as a tragedian. It is allowed almost universally that the only possible successor to the parts of Rachel is Bernhardt; while her warmest admirers admit that she lacks the tremendous power of the great Jewess, and also, I imagine, her strong, single, unerring dramatic instinct. But every character into which Mdlle. Bernhardt throws herself she fills with poetry—with a dream-like beauty, an inexpressible charm of refinement and intelligence. Her delivery, whether of the prose of Dumas or of the cadences of Racine, of Hugo, of Coppée, is beyond reproach—almost, French critics say, beyond criticism. There will be no plays more interesting to English students than the six in which Mdlle. Bernhardt will appear—*Phèdre*, *Andromaque*, *Zaïre*, *Hernani*, *Le Sphinx*, and *L'Etrangère*.

Mdlle. Croizette is, in her own way, a remarkable actress. It is

rarely that one sees a piece of realism so perfect as her performance of the heroine of the *Demi-Monde*. The hard, impudent, caressing creature, clever and yet pitiable, is brought before one fearlessly and completely; and, it may be added, this is the only way in which the part could be played. Most Englishwomen would, by trying to soften its unpleasantness, ruin the significance of it and of the drama.

Croizette's most famous part is, of course, the Blanche of Feuillet's repulsive *Sphinx*; but perhaps her finest creation is Baronette in *Jean de Thommeray*. The character saved the play (which is by MM. Augier and Sandeau) from imminent shipwreck. The actress here created a specialty. She has in her own line no rival—let us hope that she may not be troubled with many followers.

It would, however, be most unjust not to give a word of praise to Mdlle. Croizette's powers of light comedy, and to her grace and care in those quiet heroines that hardly of right belong to her.

Mdlle. Favart, since her *début* in 1848, has played a very large round of most varying parts, and for a quarter of a century has borne on her shoulders much of the hard work of the Français. She is an actress of unquestionable power; and her style, if somewhat mannered and conventional, is always large and robust. Her finest part, the Adventuress in Augier's play of that name (the original of Robertson's *Home*), we shall not have an opportunity of seeing this season. She may not appear as the heroine of the celebrated *Supplice d'une Femme*, but in several other leading and some secondary rôles.

And the spoilt child of Paris, the favourite *ingénue* of the Français—Mdlle. Reichemberg—will appear in almost all her favourite parts, except, of course, the very best! This is Agnès in *L'Ecole des Femmes*, the character in which she made her *début*, and won the often-quoted compliment of Théophile Gautier; and it is, it must be noted, not a real example of the type of *ingénue*, for Agnès is as thorough a little humbug as ever lived. I can quite imagine that English audiences will think the simplicity of Mdlle. Reichemberg, in parts where she is not supposed to be a little humbug, somewhat overdrawn; but we have not the type in real life in England, while in France it abounds, and is very genuine and very charming. In any case, however, it is to be hoped that all will see how admirable, how artistic, and how thorough an actress Mdlle. Reichemberg is.

I should like to go on, to speak of many others, especially of Madame Agar, though she is only a *pensionnaire* of the company, paid by a fixed salary—not one of the *sociétaires*, who have a direct interest in the fortunes of the house—but space forbids. I can only repeat how thoroughly, with certain exceptions, all that is done by the Comédie Française is penetrated by the good sense of its founder, and express a wish that actors of the English school—which fully deserves comparison with the French—will profit by this opportunity of criticising the merits and faults of their rivals; and, while avoiding the conventionality which is the bane of much of the Français acting, will imitate its superior breadth and fullness of style, its avoidance of pettiness, eccentricity, and trick.

R. R.

FORTUNES MADE IN BUSINESS.

IX.

RICHARD HARTMANN, THE CHEMNITZ ENGINEER AND MACHINIST.

It was in the month of February 1832 when a young man, a journeyman edge-tool maker, then on his travels, which every German artisan has to undertake to get perfect in his trade by working under different masters, arrived at the Saxon town of Chemnitz. In his pocket he had six shillings, the proceeds of his silver watch, which he had been obliged to sell. With a light heart and healthy appetite he ate his plain supper at the Bear, where he had found quarters for the night; nor did his poverty prevent him from sleeping soundly. Did some benevolent fairy reveal to him in his dreams how his name was hereafter to be identified with that of the town he had entered? Probably not; but the fact is now patent to us that the then insignificant Chemnitz owes its rapid rise and present flourishing condition to the poor and unknown travelling artisan who that night slept within its walls.

That artisan was Richard Hartmann. He was born on the 8th of November at Barr, in Alsace. He had two brothers older, and two sisters younger, than himself. Both his parents died in the decade between 1850 and 1860, and therefore lived long enough to be witnesses of the triumphs of their third son. Even at an early age he was of an exceedingly lively disposition, which made him a great favourite with

all his acquaintances, and on the strength of the indulgence shown to him in consequence, he would occasionally practise mischievous tricks. Thus young Richard one night, in going home, soiled his clothes by running against a cart standing in the street. This so enraged him, that he speedily procured a saw and cut the axle of the cart in two, since he considered that the carter deserved punishment for not having suspended a lantern from his vehicle. But the latter was of a different opinion; and the son's energetic act of revenge cost his father money and trouble; nor did the boy escape well-deserved punishment. On another occasion, while strolling about in the country, he noticed a van drawn by three horses, the driver of which had for a few moments gone away. Richard seized this opportunity to unharness one of the horses, leap on its back, and take a ride in the fields. After having gratified his whim, he unconcernedly left the horse to its fate, and made good his escape. But he was punished for this illegitimate ride by what sportsmen call 'losing leather.' His natural quickness may be inferred from the following anecdote. While he was yet learning to read, a joker asked him, 'What had neither beginning nor end?' Richard, without long consideration, tore the first and last leaves

out of his spelling-book, and answered boldly, 'This book.' No wonder that the boy's mother felt somewhat anxious as to his future, for the time had arrived for settling the trade he was to follow. For his father's occupation, who was a tanner, he felt no inclination; Richard therefore was apprenticed to an edge-tool maker, George Dietz of Barr, a stern and severe man, who, for the time, clipped the wings of the wild young bird. On the completion of his apprenticeship the young man in 1828 began his *Wanderschaft*, or travels, directing his footsteps towards Germany. He worked at various places; bravely hammering away at Mannheim, Jena, Neustadt, and other places, sometimes also suffering from an empty stomach and an empty purse; but always in good spirits, cheering and amusing his fellow-workmen. It was his lucky star that led him to Saxony, and into the town of Chemnitz, where we first introduced him to the reader as eating a modest supper, and then sleeping soundly, in spite of the generally unsatisfactory nature of his condition.

The following morning he cast about him for work, which he obtained in the establishment of C. G. Haubold sen., the founder of the Chemnitz engineering works. Richard Hartmann as yet understood very little of the construction of machinery, but by observation and study he speedily made himself acquainted with its leading principles. Not satisfied, like his mater, with supplying good work, he seized every opportunity to understand the mechanism of the machines he helped to construct, devoting his attention chiefly to carding engines, and endeavouring to improve them where possible. His employer did not fail to appreciate the young man's

zeal and intelligence; and in spite of his youth promoted him to the position of foreman of the carding engine makers. Hartmann now had many older and more experienced workmen under him; but his object was to attain his own independence, which, however, was surrounded with many difficulties. He was without means; it was incumbent on him to save; but this was a lesson more hard to learn than any other. However, his sweetheart—the thoughtful Bertha—took the matter in hand. Every pay-day she insisted on her gay lover handing her two ducats out of his wages, of which sum she took care. Certes, there were moments when the good resolutions he had formed were cast to the winds, and then many a fair ducat, laid up in Bertha's store, was squandered in extravagance. But yet after a few years Hartmann's loving treasurer had the considerable sum of one hundred and fifty ducats in her money-box, and the young man seriously thought of setting up in business on his own account. His anxieties were rather increased than lessened, yet he was always a joyous companion, indulging in all kinds of freaks and mischievous tricks. Thus, in 1834, when the Guild of Tailors had politely invited him to a ball, he managed to get a he-goat, attired in gaily coloured clothes, introduced into the ballroom, just as the tailors were merrily tripping it on the light fantastic toe. As in Germany 'Goat' is a nickname for a tailor, the beautifiers of the human form bitterly resented the insult. Hartmann only laughed; but Bertha, and the future father-in-law, Father Opett, a respectable citizen and tavern-keeper, at times felt doubtful as to the future prospects of the wild young man. But his love of fun and gaiety

were, so to speak, the lubricating ingredient of an untiring activity. When in May 1837 he applied for the freedom of the town of Chemnitz—and on that occasion gave the parting dinner of the fellow-craft—he was as wild and gay as on the day on which, five years previous, he had arrived in the town.

It was at the commencement of the year 1837 that Richard Hartmann set up in business on his own account, assisted by three workmen. In the autumn of the same year he married his Bertha, who to this day has been his true and loving helpmate. And the first years of their married life were full of struggles and anxieties. Their home consisted of two small rooms; and many a time there was great difficulty in scraping together the money required for the workmen's weekly wages. Now the father-in-law, now some other friend, had to lend his assistance. The first profits, too, were spent in enlarging the workshops, in which cotton-spinning machines were chiefly manufactured, and on which work Hartmann employed after some time about thirty hands. But in 1840 the invention of great improvements in weaving and carding engines brought such an increase of work to Hartmann that he was obliged to remove to larger premises; and as, in a short time, the number of hands he employed rose to seventy-six, he transferred his workshops to the locality known as the Convent Mill. Orders came in in such abundance that on many occasions the works had to be kept going day and night. Coffee and other restoratives were served out to the hands under the personal superintendence of Hartmann's wife.

Twice Hartmann had taken a partner, but in neither case did

the connection last long. The second was dissolved in 1841. From this year dates the great rise of Hartmann's establishment. From year to year its extent increased. The proprietor himself invented and introduced many improvements in the machinery for producing cotton twist and yarn; and his invention of the self-acting mule was the beginning of a new era in the manufacture of textile fabrics. In 1845 he removed his establishment, then occupying 350 hands, to new premises erected by him in Leipsic-street. His star was in the ascendant.

Before the year above mentioned Hartmann had already engaged about thirty hands in the construction of steam-engines. In consequence of the solid workmanship and careful finish that distinguished them, considerable orders came in: so that also in this branch of manufacture the number of workmen had to be increased. The great innate talents of the master in the construction of machinery became every day more evident. Every new success enlarged his views and developed his powers. Nor was he wanting in that perception of character which enables the employer of labour on a large scale to choose the most fitting instruments for carrying out his ideas. In all his enterprises he readily listened to the opinions and hints of his superior assistants, thus aiding his own judgment. But in most cases he followed his own inspirations, which generally proved the most correct. New ideas which, after reflection thereon, appeared to him practicable, he carried out at once and energetically. After his removal to Leipsic-street, he determined to add to his former enterprises the construction of locomotives. In this he sought and obtained the support of Govern-

ment; and thus, in 1848, the first locomotive of his manufacture, called 'Good Luck' (*Glück Auf*), was delivered to the administration of the Saxon-Bavarian state line. To secure for all his branches, but especially the building of locomotives, the best working tools, he, with several of his engineers, in 1848 undertook a journey to England. During his stay in this country the political disturbances which had long agitated Germany culminated in a series of storms which injuriously affected trade and commerce. Hartmann's establishment suffered like all the rest; but his active mind, ever full of resources, was not dismayed. He turned his attention to the manufacture of firearms, with which he occupied a great portion of his hands. Government also, recognising the necessity of maintaining an establishment like Hartmann's, assisted him with pecuniary advances. For the manufacture of firearms could only be looked upon as a make-shift, since, in order to render it a paying undertaking, it would have been necessary to modify essentially nearly all his working machinery. But he succeeded in his main object—that of keeping together his most valued workmen. And the slack time was further utilised for enlarging the workshops and generally improving the machinery; so that when real work was resumed, it was on a scale of activity which placed Hartmann's establishment amongst those of the first rank. In the year 1850 it gave employment to upwards of eight hundred hands.

In 1854 Hartmann erected his own foundries. In 1855 he undertook the construction of turbines and millwork, and soon after that of mining and boring machinery; and in 1857 a new department for the making of engineering tools

was added to his very extensive works, which now occupied about fifteen hundred hands, and embraced an area of 160,000 square yards, about half of which were covered by buildings containing six steam-engines, while in the blacksmiths' shops eighty forges were constantly at work. But Hartmann's untiring activity was not satisfied with these successes. He paid repeated visits to France and England to study the latest mechanical improvements and inventions of either country on the spot, adopting what was best in his own establishment, which had already become a kind of model factory, when in July 1860 a fire broke out, which in one night destroyed three sides of the square of buildings of which the works consisted. But Hartmann was equal to the occasion. Though more than eight hundred workmen were thrown out of their ordinary employ, their workshops and tools being destroyed, not one of them was dismissed. They were employed in the erection of an enormous though temporary wooden building, in which, within a few weeks after the catastrophe, they set to work again at their usual occupation, making use of such machinery as had been saved from the fire or hastily procured. Within seven weeks orders were being carried out as if nothing had happened. Quickly new buildings arose in the place of those which had been burnt down, surpassing the latter in size and architectural pretension. Yearly fresh additions were made to the works already in existence, so that at the present moment they occupy a prominent position among the industrial establishments of Germany. Forty years ago Richard Hartmann entered Chemnitz with two dollars in his pocket, and now his workshops, with the ma-

chinery they contain, are insured for one and a half million of dollars ! And it is not by being a hard taskmaster that Hartmann achieved his successes ; he always proved himself the kindly adviser and helpful friend of such of his work-people as deserved his confidence, and the 'hands' themselves acknowledged this when, at the jubilee held on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the foundation of the factory, they presented their master with an album representing, in a series of photographs, the life of Hartmann and the progress of the establishment founded by him, as well as the portraits of all his then and former *employés*.

A stroll through the works of Richard Hartmann, forming no inconsiderable annexe to the town of Chemnitz, introduces you into one of the most teeming hives of industry, abounding in tools, machinery, and other ingenious appliances, of the most diversified kind, for abolishing or reducing human labour. There are workshops for the construction of cotton, flax, and jute-spinning machinery, steam-engines, locomotives, hydraulic and other presses, turbines, cranes, pumps, and, in short, every kind of apparatus which modern art, science, or industry has invented, or requires for carrying on its own purposes. There are immense buildings, where the heavy blows of ponderous steam-hammers cause the massive walls to vibrate ; others, where modern Vulcans, in front of the roaring forge, wield and swing their heavy hammers, which would have frightened the Cyclops of antiquity ; again, others full of lathes of every kind and size ; in the building devoted to the making of tools, &c., there is a colossal lathe, on which axles fifty feet long may be turned, or screws of the same length cut ; and

there is, moreover, in the same building, one of the largest planing machines to be found in Europe. To sum up in a few words : the factory now embraces, on an area of about 271,700 square yards, something like fifty distinct buildings, surmounted by twelve tall chimneys, and containing twelve steam-engines, 120 forges, seven steam-hammers, 360 lathes, and about 340 other machines and engines for various purposes. The buildings are warmed with steam and lighted with gas ; they are fire-proof throughout. One hundred and twenty of the *employés* are trained as firemen ; and on several occasions when fires have broken out in the town of Chemnitz, they and their steam fire-engine have proved of the greatest service to the inhabitants. In 1870 the works gave employment to about 2900 hands.

The merits of the establishment founded by Richard Hartmann have met with frequent public recognition. It was honourably mentioned at the Industrial Exhibition of Dresden (1843), and obtained the large gold medal at that of Leipsic in 1845 ; in 1844 it also obtained the large gold medal at the Berlin Exhibition, and the first prize medals at Munich (1854) and Paris (1855) respectively ; in 1862 it received four prize medals at the London Exhibition, and in 1867 a gold and two silver medals at the Paris Exhibition. Richard Hartman himself has been honoured by his own sovereign and others ; he was made Councillor of Commerce, a Knight of the Saxon Order of Merit, of the Bavarian Order of St. Michael, of the Prussian Order of the Crown (third class), and of the Prince Reuss Civil Cross of Honour (first class). Among his workmen there are many who have

been with him for more than twenty-five years, and they form what in the establishment is called the 'Old Guard.' In 1858 the completion of the hundredth locomotive was celebrated by a grand festival, in which all Chemnitz participated; the Ministry, Count Beust at their head, came from Dresden to be present.

Richard Hartmann has all his lifetime retained the affable and genial manners which have ever secured him true and steady friends, and may, in no slight degree, have contributed to his success in all his undertakings. Let us conclude this sketch with an anecdote which shows the man's character in an amiable light.

When Hartmann was about twenty years of age, and, as we have seen above, on his travels, he met one evening, on a road in the Rhine country, a farmer returning home in his wagon. 'My good man, the evening is come, and I am tired; pray give me a lift a little way,' he said to the farmer. The latter consented; and during the ride Hartmann so won his good-will, that on arriving at the farm its master bade him come in, eat, drink, and be merry.

And Hartmann was the boy to do it, and many a jug was drained dry. The mistress of the house at first made a sour face, but she could not for any length of time resist the influence of the youth's pleasant manners; and on his taking leave next day—for they made him stop all night—he was urgently pressed to pay them another visit, on his passing that way again. But thirty years elapsed before he passed that way again. The farmer and his wife had forgotten all about the merry youth, whom thirty years ago they had asked to pay them another visit, when a middle-aged gentleman one day stepped into the farmhouse, and quietly observed, 'You were kind enough to ask me, on my last visit, to look you up whenever I came this way again; here I am, very glad to see you both looking well and hearty.' Explanations followed, and the visitor was none the less welcome because the whilom travelling journeyman had become the great engineering prince of Chemnitz, for which town he has done perhaps as much as Sir James Ramsden has done for Barrow-in-Furness.

A DAUGHTER OF MUSIC.

Rose, with her dower of golden tresses,
Sits at the open piano to-night ;
And the moon, in her glory of maiden graces,
Folds the room in a dream of light ;
For the lamps are unlit and the curtains undrawn,
And the moonbeams float like a silver dawn
Through all the wide windows that look on the lawn.

Delicate fingers, daintiest things,
Over the keyboard glance and gleam ;
And out of the world of hidden strings
Music upfloats like a wondrous dream :
A dream fulfilled through the march of years,
In loves and sorrows and hopes and fears,
And fever of longing and passion of tears.

Hark, it is Beethoven, vast and deep,
Sways the souls of the yielding strings ;
Now as in torture they wail and weep,
Now they whisper like wafted wings ;
And now 'tis the ripple of rhythmic waves,
In starlit seas, amid starlit caves,
Where never a tempest rocks and raves.

And Chopin, dreamer of sad strange dreams,
In a mist of mazurkas comes and goes ;
And ringed with a splendour of shifting gleams
Schumann glides to a gloomful close ;
And Mendelssohn, fair as the angels be,
Comes, like a breeze from a peaceful sea,
In a molten moonlight of melody.

And others are here of the soulful art,
Making their heart-beats audible ;
Weber and Schubert and sunny Mozart,
All three beloved of the gods too well :
And lo, they glimmer and pale and pass,
And the moonlight, bereft of them, whispers ' Alas !'
And the strings give a sigh for the music that was.

And Rose, with her wonderful wealth of tresses,
Forsaketh the open piano to-night ;
And the moon, in her glory of maiden graces,
Folds the room in a dream of light ;
And out on the upland the winds go by,
And murmur and mutter and droop and die ;
All else is silent in earth and sky.

All else is silent under the sky,
For Rose has deserted the voiceful keys,
And Schumann and Schubert silent lie
In a slumber of speechless fantasies ;
And the ' Songs without Words ' are sung and o'er,
And lie like waves on a desert shore
When the winds that woke them are heard no more.

Songs without words ! Ah, tuneful maiden,
 Thine eyes to-night have a tearful glow ;
 Like sapphirine seas with mist o'erladen,
 And fervour of sunset shining through !
 To that wordless music thy soul hath sung,
 A strange libretto uncharmed long ;
 Nay, words that never have found a tongue !

A strange libretto of hopes and fears,
 And loves and longings and visions flown ;
 Ay me, the song of the changeful years !
 For Rose to-night hath a mournful tone ;
 And so by the window she sits and dreams,
 Sits transfigured in glorious gleams,
 Till herself but a part of the moonlight seems.

Rose, you are rich in golden fancies ;
 Your life is a perfume of sweets and flowers ;
 You live in an Eden of soft romances,
 Where cares invade not the languid hours :
 It cannot be that your heart makes moan ;
 That you pine like a queen on a loveless throne,
 Mid splendid sorrows and hearts of stone.

Who knows ?—O maiden, I pray thee tell,
 This river whereof thou drinkest free,
 This river that flows from a secret well,
 This thing called Music, what is't to thee ?
 Hast thou a thirst that its wave can drown ?
 Or is it that when thou kneelest down,
 And gazest into its depth unknown,

Thou seest thine own soul shadowed there,
 And bendest over the mystic marge,
 Rejoicing to find it a thing so fair ;
 Nor ever heeding how many a barge
 Goes glimmering on adown the breeze,
 Glimmering on 'twixt the tremulous trees,
 On and on to the unseen seas ?

Yet how can thy soul itself behold
 In a stream so troubled, that foams as it flows ?
 Its waters are vexed with a passion untold,
 And *thou* art as soft as a dove, sweet Rose.
 Beethoven loved, and was loved not again ;
 Chopin won little of love but its pain ;
 Surely *thou* canst not have loved in vain !

Nay, I will ask no more, sweet Rose,
 But leave thee alone till another day ;
 And only petition of One who knows
 That Grief, when it find thee, as find it may,
 Shall seem unto Art as a friend, not foe ;
 That each to the other its wealth may show,
 And the Daughter of Music be brought not low.*

* Eccles. xii. 4.



THE EARL'S APPEARANCE AT THE TABLE D'HÔTE.

See 'The Story of a Return-Ticket.'

And the D

THE STORY OF A RETURN-TICKET.

At last I had arranged everything for a good long holiday. I really wanted it very much. I may also state—and I desire to do so in a modest sort of way—that I really think I deserved one. I had been working very hard. I had been working in an East-end parish, where we are really made to understand what work means, as a curate, on a hundred a year. I lived in one of the best houses of the parish, which was nevertheless a mean little house; and if I left my study-window open, and I always drew as near as I could towards the light, some of my beloved parishioners would not mind sweeping anything they could off my study-table. I had only one friend, the son of a peer, who had taken similar lodgings in a similar street with a view of studying the great question of the condition of the people. A brief residence satisfied him respecting the problems of this great question, and he then cleared out in the direction of Belgravia. My rector was then the only gentleman and man of education in the neighbourhood. He suffered greatly, however, from Population on the Brain. He was always talking, thinking, dreaming, writing, working, about the population of his parish. He was constantly writing to School Boards, to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, to charitable societies, to charitable individuals, about his population, which seemed to be always increasing, according to the Malthusian theory, in a geometrical ratio. I think, however, that I had the largest part of the work to do among the

population, so far as the arrivals, junctions, and departures of the said population were concerned. Having had no holiday for a couple of years, I was not surprised that my rector volunteered at last that I should take one; telling me, however, that the Population would be glad to see me back on my earliest convenience. I stood out, however, for six weeks, and made up my mind that I would not open any letter or telegram which my rector might send me till the six weeks were over. Only I did.

I was taking fifty pounds with me for the expenses of those six weeks. This was the amount of one whole half-year of my annual stipend. Of course I should not be able to spare all this out of my salary. But fortunately I had an aunt, one of the right sort, who hadn't much money, indeed, but who did more good with her little than most people by their abundance. She it was who, when my parents wanted me to enter the Law, told me, if I so preferred, to take the Gospel instead; and when my friends considerably informed me that I was dooming myself to poverty and obscurity, said that, as far as her narrow means went, she would back me up. Her means were but small, but her hearty sympathy and occasional cheque eked out my narrow stipend, and enabled me to grapple with that hydra-headed Population.

'Tommy,' she said to me one day, 'you don't look at all the thing. You are sallow and flabby in the cheeks, and hollow below the eyes.'

The account of my personal appearance was not flattering, but it was correct.

'So I shall trot you off to the Continent, my dear boy, as soon as the rector will give you a holiday; and I shall give you a cheque for fifty pounds to pay your expenses.'

I faltered my acknowledgments.

'But remember, Thomas, that you can't both have your cake and eat it. I shall have very few fifties to leave you, my dear boy, but I do not like you to wait for them until I am gone. Fifty pounds may do you more good now than it might by and by. I should like to see you as strong as when you went to the East-end. Only you will be fifty pounds poorer than would otherwise be the case by and by.'

I did not argue the matter with my good aunt. Fifty pounds of her little stock meant a diminution of her annual income to the extent of some thirty or forty shillings, and I knew that this could be spared and be a real luxury to her to invest it in my health and welfare. I therefore very cheerfully allowed her to add this to many other kindnesses, and took myself to the delightful employment of settling my plans.

I set about these plans in a very systematic manner. I studied maps with the voracity of a Uhlan. I invested in a *Bradshaw*, and in *Murrays* to any extent you like. Day by day I went by the Underground to the British Museum to look at maps, pictures, books. I wrote to all my travelled friends to glean all the experience I could. Instead of one tour, I was qualifying myself for a dozen. I could have electrified an examiner by my knowledge of the map of Europe. I was always covering half-sheets of note-paper with skeleton tours. My only embarrassment arose from the endeavour to bring my tour

within reasonable limits of time and money. On the whole, I thought I would go through Switzerland and the Italian lakes, then to Venice, and back through the Tyrol. Only when at Venice one really must go on to Florence, and to Rome, and to Naples. Then it would be so pleasant to run on to Cyprus—everybody just then was going on to Cyprus; and then it would be only a few days to Egypt, to Palestine, to the isles of Greece. Ah, delusive visions, too fond, too vain! I little thought that they were all to end in the bathos of a return-ticket.

The night came when I started by the mail-train to make the night passage between Dover and Calais. Of course I was going to Paris. Nearly every journey in the world leads through Paris, just as all roads went to Rome. As I paced the railway-platform I observed a gentleman also pacing the platform. He was a good-looking man, and also he looked good; two things which do not always go together. He had fine clear-cut features and dreamy smiling eyes. I was glad to find myself seated opposite to him in a smoking-carriage. Not that I really cared anything about smoking, but I thought that to light up a cigar would be an appropriate prelude to my extensive travels.

It was very remarkable how pleasantly that fellow and I got on. With some fellows you do get on; with other fellows you can never get on at all. You vote them cads from the very commencement. I expect that there are such things as elective affinities between men and men. Now this young fellow was one of the frankest and most unreserved men whom I had ever met. He spoke 'with effusion.' He seemed to be incapable of anything like reticence. In reality he was not a young man;

but though there were a few touches of gray in his hair, his mien and manners were young, with a most engaging simplicity; and once or twice a suspicion crossed my mind that he might be just a shade stupid. He told me his little history. It is very odd how often in railway-carriages I have met with people who insist on telling me their little histories and mysteries—hold me, like that Ancient Mariner, with their ‘glittering eye.’

His history was very simple. He was a clerk in one of the higher ranges of the Civil Service. He was nobody, but his father had been the younger son of an honourable, and the honourable had been the younger son of a lord, and the lord had been the eldest son of an earl. All semblance of a title had been absorbed; but still he belonged to a great house; and the head of the house, recognising his family duties, had got him a nomination to a good appointment; and he had had to ‘swot’ with a crammer, and at last got through. He had never quite paid off all his Oxford debts from that day to this; and this third cousin, the earl, kept a very tight hand on him, and he had to pay so much away every quarter from his stipend, and to insure his life, and to report himself regularly to his august relative. Still he did happen to find himself in possession of a surplus fifty-pound note, and had obtained his relative’s permission to spend his holiday on the Continent.

It really seemed not improbable that I and this agreeable new acquaintance should see a good deal of each other. We had the same amount of tether in the way both of coin and furlough. We had each taken a ticket to Paris. From Paris the whole world lay before us, to roam where we listed.

He really was a very kind-hearted man. A little incident revealed this to me. When we got to Dover we found that the storm-signals were up; and one weather-beaten tar, whose opinion we consulted, said that it would take three men to hold the captain’s hat on. However, we determined to go on; but ‘the silver streak’ showed itself in a very turbulent mood. One old gentleman observed to me that he had been to the West Indies and back, and had never suffered so much. Mr. Wyvill had descended into the cabin to fortify himself with brandy-and-water, while I had taken my seat on the open deck and stared intently at the funnel, which I was told was an infallible specific against sea-sickness. Just as I was about to try this truly scientific experiment, a big wave swept over the deck and completely enveloped me in a sheet of water. I was drenched through and through; not a thread or shred was dry.

‘Well, old man’—it is astonishing how quickly a traveller’s intimacy progresses—‘how are you getting on?’

I explained that I wasn’t getting on at all. I was wet through and through.

‘O, sea-water never hurts a fellow; you never catch cold from sea-water.’

This is, I know, a prevalent opinion; but it is as ‘the Pelagians do vainly talk.’ All I can say is, let a man sit thoroughly wet through for a couple of hours, with the additional advantage of a keen night wind cutting through him, and he will stand as good a chance of a cold as any lunatic could desire. What I know is, that when we arrived at Calais I found myself unable to proceed. The train in correspondence with the boat was starting almost at once,

and there was neither time nor opportunity to change one's clothes properly. I determined to stop that night at Calais. I urged my good-natured companion not to lose any time, but to go on with the train; but he obstinately refused to separate his travelling fortunes from my own.

It was really very good of him. The journey and the wetting had upset the British parson much more than he had felt disposed to show. So we had a quiet day at Calais, which is just the sort of place for a quiet day; went to the church, and saw some of the cannon-balls which the English had thrown in; paced along the endless tree-planted walks; fraternised with the great Gallic nation at various *cafés*; revived our recollections of Beau Brummell; made part of a prolonged *table d'hôte*; and got very comfortably into Paris next day. We did not intend to do very much at Paris. Three days were all that we allowed ourselves. For, as we acutely argued, a man can run over at any time to Paris; but we cannot very often make a prolonged tour, and we must make the best of the opportunity. Certainly the companionship of such a docile good-natured fellow was, up to the present time, a decided help to me.

But the morning after our arrival in Paris he came into my bedroom, next his own, in a most melancholy and distracted manner. It was just the woebegone expression of the man who came into Priam's bedchamber at the dead of night, and told him that half his Troy was burned. He was utterly disconcerted; and although his manner was to treat a thing lightly and pass it off, I saw that he was disconcerted.

'It's all u-p with me, old man.'

'What's the row now?'

'Lost all my money, that's all.'

'That's beastly hard lines.'

'I should think so, slightly.'

'What do you mean to do now?'

'I am sure I don't know. I am cleaned out, and can't go on. I hardly know if I have got enough money to go home with.'

'How do you suppose it happened?'

'I really can't tell. I put my fifty pounds—a five-pound note and a *rouleau* of napoleons, which I was told were the proper things to take with me—in my pocket-book, and the pocket-book itself into a coat-pocket. I had enough money in my purse to carry me as far as Paris; and going to get my money just now, I found that it was all gone.'

'Could you have left it at home or at the money-changer's?'

'I don't think so. I felt the pocket-book all safe when I was in the train.'

'I thought there were one or two queer fellows in the railway-carriage.'

'Yes; and so there were in the steamboat. And, for the matter of that, I did not at all like the appearance of the cad who sat next to me at the *table d'hôte* at Calais.'

'And you'll have to give up the idea of Milan and Florence and Venice?'

'Yes; and the Tyrol and Cyprus and Constantinople, and what not.'

'What a grind!'

'What a grind!'

'Well, we had better have a cup of coffee. Then we'll go and have our *déjeuner* on the Boulevard des Italiens, and see something of Paris; and we will settle next day what is to be done.'

So we went about; and for a man who was demi-semi-ruined he certainly took life cheerfully, and made a very good breakfast. We did some of the sights, and had a drive in the Bois, and dined,

and heard some good and cheap music in the evening. The very soil and air of France make people light-hearted. But the last thing at night he looked horribly grave, and said that he was very sorry that he could not go on to Switzerland with me.

How could I help this nice pleasant fellow—so gentlemanly, so kind, so helpless? It at once came into my mind that I really must help him if I possibly could, but it was so difficult to see how. I had so little money, and I wanted it all for myself. My professional means were practically mortgaged to my tradesmen, and I had only my aunt's *douceur*. I had once been greatly impressed with a motto which ran thus: Do all the good you can, in all the ways you can, to all the people you can. Sympathy I had in abundance with my new-found friend; but I was ashamed to give a mere expression of sympathy unless I could accompany it with something substantial. I offered all the condolence I could, and then took my bed-candle and went up-stairs.

But somehow I could not rest. Wyvill was such a good fellow evidently. No mistake about him. It was so hard that he should lose both his money and his holiday. Of course I called him an ass for his stupidity in losing that pocket-book; but I instantly retracted the derogatory expression. There was something about Wyvill which quite released him from the category of asses.

Somehow or other a thought had been working in my mind for a little while; a new intention began slowly to evolve itself.

'Now, Jones, my boy,' I said to myself, in the remonstrating style of soliloquy in which I sometimes indulged, 'you have got an opportunity, if you will only cast about for the ways and means, of doing a

real kindness once in your life. It may be many years before you have such another chance. Put your best foot forward and try what you can do.'

The idea which occurred to me was that I might take a return-ticket. I had noticed the advertisement of return-tickets to Switzerland in that morning's *Galvani*. What I had originally intended and plotted out, as has been set forth, was to take a regular little tour. How many hours had I spent enjoyably over *Bradshaw* and *Murray*? I suppose that the fruition of enjoyment could hardly equal the felicity of planning. And now that ominous and ever-recurring slip was to come off betwixt the cup and my lip. My original intention had been to go to Switzerland by way of Paris, and return by the Rhine, or else take a wider sweep and come back through Germany. Now if I drew in my wings and took things on a diminished scale, I certainly might be able to save some twenty pounds. The great expense in travelling is, of course, the locomotion. If I took a return-ticket I should have less ground to travel over, and might also economise money by staying *en pension* instead of staying at a series of hotels. It would be at least twenty pounds saved; and twenty pounds would enable this honest fellow to have his holiday, and save him from returning home in discomfort and disappointment.

I had been feeling rather feverish and upset, partly from the Channel wetting and partly with this question, which had been opened up to me; but directly I had settled it I sweetly slept the sleep of the just.

I had made up my mind, in the case of this man, to do as I would be done by. 'But though on pleasure I was bent, I had a frugal mind.' If any of his relatives liked to help him out of the bog, such a

relative would be welcome to my share of moral satisfaction arising from a virtuous action.

'Don't you think your great friend, that lord of a cousin, would help you if you were to write or telegraph to him?'

'Old man,' returned Wyvill, an absurd way of addressing his junior which I could never persuade him to leave off, 'I wouldn't have him know it for all the world. I should never hear the last of it. It is the sort of thing which he could never forgive. We should quarrel for life.'

Then I made my proposition to him. I can really claim no merit for making it. It seemed to me as easy and natural as possible. I was only doing for him what I felt sure he would do for me under similar circumstances.

'Look here, Mr. Wyvill,' I said. 'I have just got fifty pounds. I'll lend you half of it with pleasure, and we will continue our journey as long as our money holds out.'

I was a perfect master of all the pecuniary calculations of a tour. I was brimful of information. Tap me, and a pellucid stream of fiscal information on tourist subjects would flow out.

'We could run about Switzerland a good deal,' I continued. 'It is not a big country, after all, and the railways are all cheap and handy. And then we can go and live *en pension* for a few weeks, if we want to economise, and spin out the time very well.'

I will not say how much Mr. Wyvill thanked me. But he did thank me a great deal, a great deal more than was necessary. He explained his position to me, which was quite unnecessary, and made it clear that my little loan would be returned by Christmas.

So the train took us through the flat country of France, until,

high in the air, like light clouds, we saw the snowy summits of distant mountains. We really saw a good deal of Switzerland, boated on lakes and climbed up mountains. Remembering that we were not so rich as we thought ourselves a little while back, we did a great deal more walking than we should otherwise have done, which was, of course, all the better for us. I remember especially that, having gone up to Righi one day, we sailed in the sunset along the Lake of Lucerne, and stopped to sleep at Flüelen. Next day we walked through the St. Gothard Pass, and got as far as Bellinzona, looking down upon the wondrous opening view of the soft Italian country; and so on through chestnut woods, with the sound of waterfalls in our ears. Then we came to an exquisite lake set, gem-like, amid the mountains. It was a kind of enchanted land. There was an hotel on the borders of the lake which had once been a monastery, and it had now its cool corridors and arcades. The living rooms were vast; and so skilful were the contrivances for modifying the heat, that, though that summer was a hot one, we were cool enough, especially with the assistance of unlimited iced lemonade.

It seemed to me that this lonely region was just the place where we could most happily while away our holiday, and that we could hardly light upon better quarters than where we were. Our bill for two days was rather stiff. I went to the landlord of the hotel, whom I found a most intelligent and civil fellow, and told him that we meant to stay for some little time, and that if he were willing to take us on *pension* terms instead of hotel terms, we were very content to stay with him. A very reasonable agreement was soon arrived at, and the mention of this circum-

stance may perhaps put some of my readers up to a wrinkle if they have 'outrun the constable' on their travels. Neither did the reduced terms imply any reduced fare. At the *table d'hôte* we had all things in common, and very good commons they were.

I really believe that this particular way of spending a holiday was much better for me than the plan which I had originally proposed to myself. Of course it would be more ambitious to climb Mont Blanc or Monte Rosa, and it would be very nice to go out to Cyprus or Roumelia. But all this implied activity and not rest, and rest was what I wanted. There was something heavenly in those sapphire skies, in the lemon-groves, in the brooding mountain shadows cast over the lake. It was Mignon's country. Let me quote Dr. Shuldham's translation of Göthe's song:

'Know'st thou the land where the spiced
citron blows?

In foliage dark the golden orange glows.
A gentle wind breathes from the deep-
blue sky,

The myrtle stands so still, the laurel-
branch so high.

Know'st thou it well? O there with thee
Would I, my heart's beloved, gladly flee.

Know'st thou the house, with pillared
porches tall

Glitters each room, and broadly gleams
the hall:

Where sculptured statues meet with
stony stare

Thy gaze? Who caused thy tears, O
child of care?

Know'st thou it well? O, there with
thee

Would I, my strong protector, gladly flee.

The mountain-path in cloudland dost
thou know,

Where seeks the mule his footing in the
snow;

There dwells in caves the dragon's an-
cient brood;

There leans the rock, and o'er it leaps the
flood.

Know'st thou it well? There, there with
thee,

O guide my footsteps! Father, come
with me!

Dear Wilhelm Meister! Reading
that enchanted page I would

gladly renew the possibilities of
adventurous youth. I thought
that life's romance was all over
for the drone of an East-end curate.
But it was not so to be.

One afternoon, coming back from
an excursion from some 'mountain-
path in cloudland,' we saw signs
of some extra bit of business
and excitement about our hotel.
There was a crowd about the arch-
way that led into the central court
of our hotel. In the court there
was a large travelling carriage,
about which groups and hangers-on
were clustered admiringly; and we
were told that an English *milord*
and some gracious ladies had ar-
rived that day.

By and by Wyvill came into my
room in a state of considerable ex-
citement. It was a very pleasant
room with an outlook on the lake,
which seemed like a gorgeous pic-
ture set in a frame. My little iron
bed was stowed away in a corner,
and across it a curtain, which
being drawn converted my room
into a snuggerly, if we wished to
retreat from the vast public rooms.
Here we drank the wine of the
country—very pleasant and cheap
—and smoked mild cigarettes.
Here Wyvill found me, breaking in
somewhat impetuously for a man
of his languid nature.

'Who on earth do you think
has come in that travelling car-
riage?'

'Not knowing, can't say.'

'It's my cousin, Lord Dash!'

'You don't mean it! That earl
who looks so sharp after you?'

'The same. Isn't it a nuisance?'

'An awful nuisance.'

And yet it seemed to me rather
hard that the Earl of Dash should
be voted a nuisance. The helpless
cousin, Frederick Wyvill, was all
the better for this great connection,
and the supervision which this
great connection was kind enough
to exercise over him. Wyvill's

great anxiety evidently was that the earl, being on the spot, was bound to find out all about the important loss of that fifty pounds. I represented to him that this accident was really no particular business of Lord Dash's; that Lord Dash could not know it unless he chose to tell him, and he was under no necessity of telling him if he did not choose.

'But you don't know that man's powers of wiggling; you don't know that man's powers of wiggling,' he kept on saying; 'and he's sure to get it out of me, quite sure.'

He felt himself powerless to conceal anything from the basilisk eyes of the lordly Dash. He was sure 'it would all come out.' Wyvill was a sort of man who always wanted some other sort of man to exercise an ascendancy over him. His notion was that he had better cut and run for it. But the earl might have already detected his presence. Besides, he had no money to enable him to run away.

That afternoon I had a distant view of the noble lord extending three patronising fingers to Wyvill, who received them in a bashful and penitential manner. I wondered whether he and his daughters would make their appearance at the *table d'hôte*. But such a great man as the earl of course thought fit to dine in his own private apartments, and Wyvill had to dine with them. He did not have half so good a dinner, or half so lively a dinner, as we had in the *salle-à-manger*; and he had to pay four or five times as much for it. Thus it happens in this world that one man's impecuniosity is balanced by another's abundance. Our landlord was kind to us, but he took it out of the noble lord.

We discussed matters over some *Asti spumante*. Wyvill told me that the dinner was dull, and that

his noble relative felt it dull, and intended to grace the *table d'hôte* with his right honourable presence next day. So he came in with his daughters next day, two bright, pleasant, unaffected girls. Wyvill introduced me to them and to the earl. The noble lord was a very shrewd old man; he evidently looked upon his cousin as being partially imbecile, and there was a good deal of satire mixed up with any remarks which he addressed to him. The earl was full of anecdotes and observation; evidently a man who was painfully anxious to do right, benevolent and high-principled. He came as little near the idea of a bloated aristocrat as any man whom I had ever seen.

It so happened that I saw a good deal of Lord Dash and his people. There is no place like an hotel by an Italian lake for getting up intimacies. You take your meals together, you sit in the drawing-room together, you climb the hills and boat on the lake together. I really was very much interested and amused by the earl's remarks. He noticed this, and gave me plenty of them. As for Wyvill, he evidently shirked his noble relative. He did not care for autobiographical remarks of an improving tendency. He had the bad taste not to care for his cousineses, if I may coin a word which is much wanted in the language. He was long and lazy. He would go in a boat if he was not required to pull; or climb a mountain if he could do it on a mule's back. *Voilà tout*. So he took heavily to smoking and billiards, while I escorted the young ladies, with or without their noble sire, over the lake or up the heights.

Lady Gertrude and Lady Alice had been travelling for some time. I soon saw how much ground

they had travelled, and they must also have seen how little I had done myself. These young ladies nicely balanced each other. Each supplied a counteractive principle to the other; and if I flirted with the Gertrude I was recalled to my senses by the Alice. Fortunately I had read travel-books so extensively that I was able to hold my own when we discussed matters. Only I confess that when I heard their description of regions which I longed to traverse, which I had studied in my waking hours, had pictured in my dreams, with a sense of irritation I started impatiently to my feet, and remembered remorselessly that I was bound in the fetters of a return-ticket, and that any progress was barred by my inexorable fate. I often vengefully contemplated that obnoxious little document; I execrated it, I shook my fist at it, once I stamped it vindictively under foot, and was only restrained by prudential motives from altogether destroying it. It needed a frequent glance at Wyvill's placid happy countenance, drinking in the beauty and freshness of the heavens and the earth, to reconcile me to the painful limits imposed on me by the return-ticket. Under the melancholy circumstances I felt myself in some sort of way a ticket-of-leave man.

Before the full term of my holiday was over I was summoned home by my rector, who explained as an excuse that the population was growing with a rapidity which was simply frightful. Not content with an extraordinary average of births, the parish had imported a mighty influx of labourers for dock extension or something of that sort. The rector wrote in an agitated frame of mind, and evidently in a state of collapse. It was very hard lines; but the recall was peremptory, and, to say the

truth, in spite of that admirable system of balances and compensations, Lady Gertrude was beginning seriously to assail my peace of mind. When I announced my intention of a speedy return—through the same flat French country, through the same inevitable Paris—that good fellow Wyvill said that he must accompany me. As he had another ten days to run, I would not allow this, and left him pathetically lamenting that when he no longer had me to back him up he was sure that 'the murder would out.'

I reached home, and resumed the heavy routine of my East-end duties. Sometimes I thought of those days by the enchanted lake; but it was a kind of reverie in which I hardly dared to indulge for long. One day, however, ten months afterwards, when that pleasant interlude was almost vanishing from my memory, I received the following letter from my Lord Dash:

'Dashwood Park, May 1.

My dear Mr. Jones,—The living of Dashwood in my gift is just vacant, and I give myself the pleasure of offering it to you. In value it is close on nine hundred a year, and the grounds adjoin my own. Of course it is a great point with us to have a pleasant neighbour, which will be insured in your case. But I must tell you that this is not the real reason which induces me to offer you preferment. I have been informed by my excellent but careless kinsman, Frederick Wyvill, of your most kind and generous behaviour to him, for which I thank you very much, and which we both thoroughly appreciate. I hope you will write very soon, and tell me that you accept.—Yours very faithfully,

DASH.'

The offer was too good to be re-

fused. The aunt who thought that I had hardly seen the value of my money was delighted when I told the story to her, and I am sure that she would tell me in any case that I had done the right thing.

Wyvill and I used to interchange occasional letters, and in more than one he hinted at our resuming, under happier auspices, that abridged journey to foreign parts. At last there came a time when I wrote to him to say that I really was going to undertake

something approximating to the 'grand tour.' I added that I should be favoured with a companion who was at once handsomer and more helpless than himself; but that for such a rare combination I should be obliged to have recourse to one of the opposite sex. In fact, Lady Gertrude and I were about to make a honeymoon tour.

But thinking of good old Wyvill, I have written a sermon on this text: 'Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.'

Down the quiet country road, before you reach the lofty ridge,
Where the birch-tree, first awakened to the morning's low breath,
 swings,
I oftentimes sit in silence on the small moss-covered bridge,
Near the little shady nook where the blackbird sings.

There the spreading trees meet o'er me, and I hear no harsh voice
calling,
Whilst his sweetness to my fancy's dream a sacred feeling brings,
As it mingles with the rippling of the brook o'er pebbles falling
In the little shady nook where the blackbird sings.

There the ivy climbs the highest of the lofty trees beside me,
And the bluebell like a carpet in the early summer springs;
In the thorn I need but clamber, and the snowy bloom would hide me
In the little shady nook where the blackbird sings.

Where the trout, his supper seeking, in the sunny beam is leaping,
And the pool is brought to life again in many glistening rings,
When the day seems growing fainter, and the shadows onward creeping,
In the little shady nook where the blackbird sings.

When the swallows dart like spirits underneath the narrow arches,
And the air a sweetened perfume like the almond round me flings,
And I dream of holy quiet as I watch the feathery larches
In the little shady nook where the blackbird sings.

O, if I could only tell you what unbroken heartfelt pleasure
Ever waits me in this spot, to which my thought so fondly clings,
You would follow me, nor wonder 'tis my only pleasant leisure,
By the little shady nook where the blackbird sings !

T. D.

MRS. LANCASTER'S RIVAL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'A FRENCH HEIRESS IN HER OWN CHATEAU.'

CHAPTER XXI.

FLORA'S OLD FRIEND.

THE road down Pensand Combe, through most of its course, ran along close to the edge of the wooded cliff that overhung the creek; but here and there it branched off, making a small angle inland, and passing between a tall field hedge on one side, and a wild mass of brambles on the other, or farther down, between low stone walls, with odd little nooks of garden niched in behind them. There were one or two sharp corners, and Dick, as he went tearing recklessly down, almost ran into two people who were coming round one of these. He pulled up suddenly, very much to the pony's surprise, and got down to speak to them; for they were Randal Hawke and Flora Lancaster.

'Do you want to break our necks, and your own too?' said Randal.

He looked pale and cross, and his temper was not improved by Dick's glance at Flora, which, quick as it was, meant pity and surprise. For Dick was startled and shocked by the worn strained misery in Flora's face; she looked years older than when he and she had parted at St. Denys only a few weeks before.

'Have you taken Miss Ashley home?' said Randal, in the same sharp tone.

Dick looked hard at him, and there was something in his eyes

which reminded Randal that he was making a fool of himself in giving up his usual coolness of manner. It was hardly possible—such a stupid boyish fellow—but Dick at that moment looked as if he might be dangerous.

'If you have,' said Randal, 'I'm much obliged to you. I had to leave her for a few minutes, and I suppose she was tired of waiting. You stepped in at the nick of time.'

'Yes,' said Dick. 'Her walking back to the Castle seemed rather hopeless. She is safe there now. Mrs. Lancaster, are you going to walk back to St. Denys?'

'Yes,' said Flora. 'There is no other way.'

She spoke in a low voice, rather dreamily, and without looking at him. Her eyes had wandered away to the high ground on the other side of the Combe.

'Will you let me row you round to St. Denys?' said Dick. 'I am going back at once, if you won't be cold on the water.'

'You are a bold fellow, Dick. Fish and all!' said Randal, with a touch of his usual mockery, and a deliberate scanning of Dick from head to foot. 'You are hardly got up for the occasion; but as Miss Ashley put up with you, perhaps Mrs. Lancaster will.'

'I shouldn't wonder,' said Dick. 'Will you?' to Flora.

'Thank you. I shall be very glad,' said Flora.

'You have nothing but a fishing-boat there, have you?' said

Randal. 'Take our boat. You will find it down there. I will send for it to-morrow.'

'That is just what I thought of doing,' said Dick.

'O, no,' said Flora, suddenly interfering. 'Let us have the fishing-boat, please. I like it much better.'

An odd half-angry smile curled Randal's lip.

Dick answered her quite gravely,

'No, that's impossible. It would spoil your clothes;' and Flora said no more.

'Good-bye,' said Randal. 'I shall see you some day, Dick. Good-bye, Mrs. Lancaster.'

They parted without any shaking of hands. Randal lifted his hat, Dick nodded, and Flora bowed without looking at him. He walked away with light quick steps up the lane, leaving the little group standing there; Dick, Flora, Daniel Fenner's cart and pony.

Some of Dick's disgust and indignation escaped him in mutterings as he turned to pull in a strap that had loosened itself.

'To answer him civilly, and not take him by the collar and pitch him over the edge into the mud yonder! I see your little game, Mr. Randal, and I'll be hanged if— Will you get into the cart?' he said to Flora, suddenly forgetting Randal in sympathy with her. 'I'll drive gently, and it won't shake you much.'

'I would rather walk, thank you,' said Flora.

'Very well. Then I'll lead the pony; it is not far, after all,' said Dick.

They walked one on each side of the cart, and neither of them spoke till they reached the beach. Flora seemed to be in a sort of waking dream, and Dick felt too much real sorrow, too much respect for his old love in her

trouble, to make conversation about nothing. He thought it a curiously providential thing that he should have met her on this fatal afternoon—he, the only person who knew her secret, and could understand what she must feel. Though how any woman could care for that smooth villain Randal Hawke, with his horrid manners, his odious scented neatness, his second-rate dandyism, Dick confessed himself unable to understand.

Randal's boat had been brought down to the ferry, and was lying there at the little landing-place. Those two were soon out on the open river, alone together in the wild cloudy evening. Flora sat in a stooping attitude, with her eyes bent down, and her shawl drawn tight round her shoulders. Dick's pulling was easy work, going down with the tide, and the light boat darted through the water. Presently Flora leaned forward, and dipped her fingers into the small gray-green waves that came washing up round them.

'Do you remember,' she said—they were almost the first words she had spoken to Dick since they parted with Randal—'how you fell into the water that night at Morebay?'

'Yes,' said Dick. He remembered too, sadly enough, how she had reminded him of that before, when he met her on the hill that evening, and carried her parcel, and lingered at her gate in the lovely summer twilight. How happy she had been then, poor Flora, carrying on an innocent little flirtation with her old friend, and keeping her precious secret in the background all the time!

'I suppose you were not in the water long enough to know what drowning is like?' Flora went on.

'Why, no. Those fellows had me out almost before I was in.'

'They say it is a very peaceful easy death,' said Flora, staring down into the depths of the Penyr, and dabbling with her fingers in a tiny wave-crest.

'Don't believe them,' said Dick. 'It is horrid choking agony; few things worse. I've heard that from people who really have been almost drowned.'

'But it is very soon over.'

'It seems like hours, like a lifetime.'

'Well,' said Flora, with a sigh, 'the idea of it is most tempting. Look at this nice gentle water; not even cold. Just a plunge, and I believe one's unhappiness would be over for ever. Yes, I do think so; for in that other world there can be no such cruelty as there is here. Just a plunge down into these green depths—and I know how strong the currents are, they would carry one right out to sea.'

Dick was a perfectly brave man, as far at least as physical courage is concerned. He was even rashly brave sometimes; but at that moment he was terrified. Flora's extraordinary calmness, the dreamy fascinated gaze that she fixed on the water, the longing way in which she drew her fingers through it,—all this made him feel that there was imminent danger of her throwing herself suddenly in. He spoke, however, in the coolest quietest manner, even with a smile on his face.

'But suppose you did throw yourself in, you don't think you would be drowned here, do you?'

'What could prevent it?' said Flora, without raising her eyes.

'I should prevent it,' answered Dick. 'My coat is off already. I should instantly dive after you, get hold of you, and swim with you to that bank. I am one of the best swimmers in the world.

We should both get a good wetting, and perhaps catch bad colds. That's all. So when you think of attempting it, let me know.'

Dick spoke with a pleasant smile; he evidently took it all as a joke.

'O Dick!' cried Flora suddenly and painfully. 'You are so cruel; but of course you don't understand.'

Her interest in the water had suddenly ceased; she buried her face in her hands, and rocked herself gently, like a woman in great trouble. 'I can't bear it,' she sighed; but Dick just caught the despairing words.

'I do understand, though,' he said, 'only too well. What tries me is to see you wasting your regret on a worthless scoundrel who only deserves a horse-whipping, and may perhaps get his deserts in time.'

'O, remember that I trusted you,' said Flora. 'It is a secret; nobody else knows.'

Dick was silent, and she presently went on:

'I have suspected it for some days, but to-day on the beach it was made quite clear to me. He told me he must marry some one with money, and we know what that means. Don't you see, Dick? He is going to marry Miss Ashley.'

'O, is he?' said Dick.

'He will have no trouble there; she likes him quite enough. He made sure of that before he told me; and he would not have told me now, if I had not made him. O, to think of it! What shall I do?'

'I could tell you that,' said Dick, 'but of course you wouldn't listen.'

'I am listening. Go on.'

'First of all,' said Dick, with great decision, 'you should thank God for setting you free in time from one of the most rascally

seamps in England. Then you should forget all about him, and be as cheerful as if he had never existed.'

'Ah, you can't mend your life as you would mend your glove,' said Flora, shaking her head.

'It will take a little patience, of course,' said Dick, rather proud of his preaching, 'but you will do it in time. Do you know, when you first told me about him, that day in the Combe, I knew he was a liar.'

'Did you?' said Flora wearily.

It seemed to Dick that he had better not say any more; the poor woman had been too much tried, and perhaps silence was best for her. She sat with her head drooped and her hands clasped, thinking or dreaming, and this continued till they reached the quay.

Dick felt very thankful, as he helped Flora on shore, that she was safe there. He had come to the conclusion that the water was the worst place for any one in trouble of mind, like hers; it seemed such a quiet easy refuge close at hand. He thought it would be a long time before he took any one out again, under such circumstances. The fishwomen and all the waterside people stared with great interest at these two, going about together once more.

Dick nodded to many old friends, as he led Flora up the slippery steps and the steep winding lanes of St. Denys. She hardly spoke till they had reached the gate of Rose Cottage, where they had parted so many times before, and in such a different way.

'Wait a minute. I want to speak to you,' she said. 'Tell me, is she a nice girl?'

'Yes,' said Dick. 'I'm sure she is a nice girl.'

'Then she ought to be saved from this.'

Dick's own mind had been occupied with the same subject, but he did not quite see his way, and he told Mrs. Lancaster so. She looked at him with wild puzzled eyes, as they stood there together in the gray evening. One long golden curl of her hair had shaken itself down, and was lying on her shoulder, but it did not look pretty; it only added a little dishevelled untidiness to her sad looks. Dick was not the least bit in love with her now. He only felt most heartily sorry for his old friend.

'Who is to save her?' said Flora.

'To tell you the truth, I don't know,' said Dick. 'But let me ask you this. Would you mind my telling aunt Kate all about it, and finding out what she thinks? She is very clever; she might hit on some way, without your being pulled into it at all. You can trust her, I assure you.'

'I know I can,' said Flora. 'My brain is in such a strange whirl that I can't think properly. I am all in confusion. You must forgive me.'

'I can fancy that,' said Dick.

He waited kindly and patiently for a minute or two, till Flora spoke again.

'I don't know whether it is right or wrong; but Miss Northcote will know. You may tell her. As to me—it doesn't matter about me. If I was a Roman Catholic, I could go into a convent. As I'm not, I must stay at Rose Cottage. Good-night, Dick. You have been very good to me.'

She gave him her hand with a faint smile that was sadder than any sadness.

'Good-night,' he said. 'You may always depend on me.'

He watched her till she had gone in at the house-door, and

closed it behind her. Then he hurried up the hill towards home.

After dinner that evening, Miss Northcote was sitting at work by her lamp in the drawing-room, when Dick came in and sat down near her at the table.

'You look very quiet and comfortable,' he said, 'but do you know that you are in the midst of a sensation novel?'

'What do you mean, Dick?' said his aunt, looking up.

'I'll tell you all about it, beginning at the very beginning, which was before I went to Yorkshire.'

In the long story which followed on this, what surprised Miss Northcote most was the fact of Randal Hawke's engagement to Mrs. Lancaster. This she seemed hardly able to believe. The rest of the story was far less startling. Randal's intention of marrying 'money' in the person of Mabel Ashley seemed only natural in a man of his kind. When Dick described the manner in which he had comforted Flora in the boat, Miss Northcote could not help smiling.

'If she cared for him,' said she, 'which probably she did, the period of thankfulness won't come for some time yet. Poor thing! I am afraid your little sermon was wasted, Dick. What a sad story it is, though! and how very heartless Randal must be! I don't wonder that Anthony dislikes him.'

'No, indeed,' said Dick. 'And now comes the question—is there any way of nipping his beautiful plan in the bud?'

Kate leaned back in her chair, gazed at Dick, and considered.

'Really, I don't know,' she said. 'Miss Ashley belongs to them, you see. Nobody has any right to interfere; she is the General's ward, and we can't take

her out of his hands. She can't be got away from Pensand, and as long as she is there of course Randal has it all his own way. I believe she is contented too; for I saw them driving together one day, and certainly she looked quite happy. And Randal may be really attached to her: we don't know. One can't imagine that he would ever have done anything so romantic as to marry Mrs. Lancaster.'

'Then why did he engage himself to her? She has been abominably used,' said Dick. 'I don't see that he would be doing anything so romantic, as you call it. Other people besides Randal—'

'Yes, I know,' said Kate. 'But now I am thinking about Miss Ashley. What can we do! It is no business of ours, you see. I'll go and call again, if you like. That will remind her that there are other people in the world besides Randal and his father. But when you really have no excuse for interfering—'

Dick looked discontented. After a few minutes' silence he broke out rather angrily,

'Of course, I know it is not the first time an engagement has been broken off, though I never saw such a horrid instance of it. But the worst of it is the fellow being such a liar, behaving all through in such a wretched cowardly way, and braving it out with that insolent manner of his. I should like to make the whole thing public; and I would too, if it were not for Flora. She wouldn't like it, poor thing.'

'No, I should think not,' said Kate. 'And, after all, she is the first person to be considered. Miss Ashley, poor girl, I don't know how it is, but I can't get up any very deep interest in her, though Anthony is so fond of her, and you seem to like her too. Anthony,

by the bye! he might influence her, if nobody else could. He is the only person that goes often to the Castle. And he dislikes Randal quite enough already, without knowing Mrs. Lancaster's story. I'm going to Carweston soon, and I'll try to find out whether he has any idea of this plan of Randal's.'

'Yes, you might do that,' said Dick.

There was another long pause, and then he went on:

'I do care what becomes of that girl. There is something rather taking about her, poor little thing. I am sorry for her now, just as I was when we travelled down together, only more so.'

'You have forgiven the little airs she gave herself when we called that day,' said Miss Northcote.

'O dear, yes; it was only shyness. One soon gets over that sort of thing,' said Dick.

He took up a book that he had been reading, and began to turn over the leaves. Kate watched him over her knitting, with a wondering doubtful smile. How very strange, she thought, if that little dark girl was to take possession, one after the other, of both Mrs. Lancaster's lovers! She hardly knew why this fancy came into her head, for Dick showed no consciousness. And being, with all his faults, an utterly unmercenary creature, his aunt felt sure that the conquest, if it was made, would be Mabel's own.

He told her he was very sorry, and hoped that Dick Northcote had taken good care of her, in the easiest and pleasantest way.

'What became of poor Mrs. Lancaster? Did she go home?' said Mabel.

'She meant to walk home,' said Randal; 'but as we came up the Combe together, we met Dick and his cart rattling down. By the bye, you must have been shaken to pieces. So I left her in his charge, and he was going to pull her round to St. Denys in our boat. That would be less tiring than such a long walk.'

'And was it all right?' said Mabel. 'Was he pleased?'

'Pleased?' said Randal, looking at her.

'I thought you seemed to hint that he had not been quite nice to her. I fancied that was what distressed her.'

Mabel coloured, and wished she had not asked any questions. They seemed such an odd jumble altogether, these relations of Randal and Dick and Mrs. Lancaster. She was sorry to show any curiosity about them.

'O,' said Randal, 'it was not Dick entirely; she has lots of things on her mind.'

To do him justice, he spoke gravely enough about Flora, though of course no one could have guessed from his manner that he, and no one else, was to be blamed for her unhappiness. But he did not seem inclined to say any more about her, and Mabel did not ask.

For several days after this Mabel saw no one but her companions at Pensand. The General left her and Randal very much alone together, and by this strange arrangement, as it might well have seemed to most people, they grew more intimate day by day. There were some subjects that they avoided:

CHAPTER XXII.

MOREBAY.

RANDAL did his very best to efface from Mabel's mind any disagreeable impression which that afternoon might have left on it.

they did not talk of their neighbours; but somehow there always was plenty to talk about, and Randal never let Mabel be dull. She was amused and cheerful, and yet not quite happy, through those soft August days. Things that Randal said did not always ring true; Mabel's instincts rebelled sometimes, though she only scolded herself for being silly. Nearly every day he took her out for a drive; they went far away into the country, through miles of lovely winding roads and lanes, where a few trees were just beginning to show a touch of gold after the long hot summer; far up the rivers, sometimes making a little picnic of their own on some terraced bank where the fern was fading. They had no more boating. Randal seemed to have taken a dislike to the river and the Combe, where he had gone through so much that was unpleasant.

Perhaps he could hardly have explained to himself why he did not speak to Mabel, and make it quite sure. With all his assurance, possibly he still felt a little doubtful of her answer, and he wanted her to be perfectly used to him, and accustomed to expect everything from him, before he ran such a great risk.

During those days, though Anthony came two or three times to the Castle, he was not once allowed to see Mabel alone; and while his heart was full of uneasiness about her, there was nothing to rouse his suspicions very strongly, or to give him an excuse for speaking to Randal. Miss Northcote had hinted to him no more than he felt pretty sure of long ago. Besides, poor Anthony had played his best card and lost it; it was plain that he, at least, had no rights over Mabel's future, though no one knew this but themselves.

Randal had every reason to be confident. A box of letters and presents, the sad memorials of those two years, had reached him from Mrs. Lancaster. Considering his own nature, it was strange that he had such faith in Flora's honour and reticence; but he felt quite securely certain that—for her own sake, as he chose to put it—she would keep the secret still; nobody would ever know what they had been to each other. He burnt the letters late one night in his father's study-fire; and as he watched the thin black curls that were now nothing, but had once been so much, he felt himself really a free man, and thought he might as well ask Mabel—to-morrow.

'She is not a bad-looking girl, you know; but I wish she was fair,' Randal confided to the dying fire.

And then came a terrible flood of recollections. Could it be only two years since he first made love to Flora in the Combe? and was any one ever so pretty as Flora? All that would not bear thinking of at night alone, with nothing to divert his mind; for it was true that even now, for some mysterious reason, after he had left her so cruelly, doing all he could to break her heart, Flora Lancaster was still to this wretched Randal the one woman in the world. But he did not give way long to these morbid thoughts. He left the study and went up-stairs, a free man, quite ready to forget all this past foolishness, and determined that before the next night came the little heiress should be engaged to him.

Randal's continued presence at Pensand had rather a strange effect on his father. He seemed to have grown much older since Mabel first came; he was more silent, less arbitrary; he spent his time more than ever alone, and

appeared willing that Randal should take the rule of everything. His manner to his young ward was unflinching kind and pleasant, though he saw less and less of her, leaving her, like everything else, in his son's care.

But the morning after Randal had burnt his letters, General Hawke told them at breakfast that he was going to drive to Morebay, and asked whether they liked to go with him.

'I have business at the bank,' he said. 'You might show Mabel the harbour and the dockyards. You want some variety in your expeditions.'

'Would you like it, Mabel?' said Randal.

'Of course she would like it,' said the General. 'Pensand for ever is too much for young people. And she won't refuse me the pleasure of her company, for I am an old man, and failing fast. I may never leave Pensand again.'

Mabel looked up rather anxiously; but the General smiled at her.

'I should like it of all things,' she said.

It certainly had been a trial to a young creature, whose curiosity went on growing, to live for so many weeks within a few miles of a place like Morebay, and to have seen nothing of it except the great bustling station, so near the end of her long hot journey from town. This was a fresh beautiful day, with a bright sun, and that light wind blowing which made the St. Denys country look its prettiest, ruffling the surface of its broad gleaming waters. Mabel thoroughly enjoyed the drive, especially the delightful excitement of going on board the chain-ferry, and being drawn across the Mora, horses and all, in company with several carts. Then, as they drove on to-

wards Morebay, there was an occasional view of something blue and great, sparkling and rocking itself against the horizon. And so they came into the white town, with its broad streets and stately buildings, lying in a bold curve of the coast, between the hills and the sea, its harbour, and the mouth of its river, defended by forts and batteries; ships of every size and nation lying together inside those strong defences; great dockyards hard at work; boats darting by here and there in the sunshine with diamond flashes of spray; green and purple shadows crossing the blue of the sea; the deep green of trees on the slopes running down to the water. There was something so glorious in all the noise and brightness and colour of it, that Mabel could hardly speak for pleasure. It seemed so wonderful to have looked down on all this from that silent height of Pensand, to have seen the lights coming out in the evening, day after day, and the distant masts, and the still more distant gleam of sea, and now to find herself really in the midst of it all.

'How beautiful, how very beautiful it is!' she said to Randal, half under her breath.

'Yes, it is a fine town,' he said; 'and one of the best situations in England.'

Randal was not quite in his usual spirits. Driving down that morning through St. Denys to the ferry they had passed Captain Cardew's house, and in spite of himself he had been obliged to look that way. And as the carriage went slowly down the hill, Randal, sitting with his back to the horses, had seen the old Captain himself hurry out to the garden-gate, and stand there staring after it in a fixed manner which struck him as rather

strange. He felt a little uncomfortable, and as if something troublesome was going to happen; and it occurred to him that the expedition of that day to Morebay might be a fortunate thing for him. If that appearance of Captain Cardew's meant anything serious, what was to prevent him from walking in at Pensand Castle, and creating a disturbance there that might be very difficult to calm down again? If his father knew! And if Mabel knew! However, at present they did not know, and it was the part of a wise man to make the best of to-day. He had Mabel all to himself to-day, though it might be for the last time, and before the day was out he meant to be on such terms with her that she might stand by him and believe in him against all the world.

General Hawke went to Morebay very seldom, and thus had many people to see, and much business to do. He had brought Stevens with him, intending Randal and Mabel to be free to amuse themselves, which they found no difficulty in doing; and Randal was soon himself again in the interest of showing things to any one so fresh and so enthusiastic as Mabel. He showed her the dockyard, took her out in a boat in the harbour, and finally on board an ironclad, of which he knew some of the officers. The captain received them with a true sailor's hospitality, and insisted on giving them luncheon. Every one on board watched Mabel with interest, as she walked on the beautiful decks, and listened smiling to her questions. She was like a little princess among the fine rough sunburnt fellows, beside whom Randal looked smaller and paler than ever, though he could not be insignificant. His manner to her was

quite devoted, and Mabel certainly enjoyed being made so much of, and referred to him most naturally in everything. His friends on board saw the state of the case very plainly, and took the good-humoured interest that friends generally do; they thought it was a good thing for young Hawke. Every one knew he had been going on at a great pace in London, and most likely the old General had saved nothing. To catch a nice girl with fine eyes and seventy thousand pounds was the best thing that could happen to him; his friends were quite agreed in that, though perhaps they thought it a little hard that no one should have been allowed a chance of disputing the prize with him. But that was only to be expected from a close old beggar like the General.

Captain Stewart, of H.M.S. Fortune, was a kind-hearted man, and felt sorry for the young heiress. He thought of his own daughter, very little younger than Mabel, who was hardly ever let out of her mother's sight, and looked, at least, much better able to take care of herself. He thought it a great pity that General Hawke had not provided some chaperon for his orphan ward, instead of letting her run about alone with his good-for-nothing son, even though she might be engaged to him; and somehow the captain did not feel sure that this was the case. It was no business of his, however, and all he could do was to take good care of the girl while she was on board his ship. He showed her everything in the kindest way, explained the machinery, and how the guns were run out and fired, told her the names of nearly all the ships in the harbour, and what their different flags meant. They were still deep in signals when Randal

joined them; he had been talking to some of the other officers, more of his own age and calibre than Captain Stewart. Mabel was thoroughly sorry to leave the hospitable ship; but Randal had no intention of spending the afternoon there.

There was a fine park at Morebay, on the cliffs to the east of the harbour, where a band used to play on summer afternoons, and people walked about, played games, sat under the trees, and enjoyed the wonderful united beauty of sea and land. The short close grass of the park ran down to the edge of the great shelving red cliffs that dipped their rocky feet in the sea. On that side all the horizon was brilliant sea; on the other, checkered sunshine and shade, green turf and trees, the white terraces of Morebay rising like a great amphitheatre to the far background of blue hills.

After they had landed from the *Fortune*, Randal took Mabel into the park, thinking that she might rest there very pleasantly for an hour. He found a place a little apart from the people, a bench under a group of tall firs that overlooked the sea, and here they sat down. Randal was rather thoughtful, and perhaps more silent than usual, though there was plenty to say about all they had seen. It was Mabel's opinion that she had never in her life spent a more delightful day.

'You are very good to say that,' said Randal. 'Yes, these things are interesting to any one who has not seen them before. I hope I have not tired you.'

'O no! how could I be tired? I have been amused all the time.'

'The most tiring process in the world, it is generally thought,' said Randal.

'I have not had enough of it

to tire me. I really can't imagine what it would be, to be bored by seeing things. One hears that people are, but indeed I can't understand it,' said Mabel, smiling.

'There is something sad, as well as pleasant, in hearing you say that.'

'Why sad?'

'Because it sounds as if your life had been such a very dull one.'

'O, I don't know. Perhaps it is a good thing not to see things too soon. One enjoys them all the more, I think. I am quite contented. One can't expect to understand everything.'

This last little bit of moralising was addressed to herself, in answer to the little doubtful misgiving that told her she was *not* quite contented.

'What do you want to understand?' said Randal.

'You?' Mabel felt half-inclined to say; but she did not. She only shook her head, smiling, and looked away over the sea.

Randal sat and gazed at the slight figure, the dark delicate profile, the long black eyelashes, all so clearly defined against the background of sea and sky. It did not seem a very hard fate to ask this girl to marry him. And yet it was one of the hardest things he had ever had to do in his life.

'Mabel,' he said, 'did you hear what my father said this morning, about being an old man, and failing fast?'

'Yea,' she said, looking round instantly. 'But he didn't mean it, did he?'

'O yes, he meant it. And you must see yourself that it is a fact. Seventy-nine is old, and he had a very hard life of it in India, when he was a young man. And it is quite evident to me—I should have thought it must be so to every one—how fast he has been

going down-hill lately. Even since you came he talks less, walks less, sleeps more, in fact gets older every day. He is perfectly aware of it all himself, and he thinks it is as well that we should know it too.'

There was a real sorrow in Mabel's face. 'I have been very horrid and selfish,' she said. 'I have thought of no one but myself all this time.'

'Nonsense, dear Mabel. Your manner to him has always been charming,' said Randal gently. 'His own daughter, if he had one, could not have been more thoughtful or more attentive to all his little whims. It is I who ought to reproach myself. Haven't you often stood up for him, when I have accused him of not being kind enough to you? Don't look so sorrowful, Mabel. It is a compliment to my father, but he wouldn't like it, all the same.'

'But do you really think he is ill?' said Mabel.

'Not ill. Only old. It is the weakness that belongs to old age, and then if any illness does come, there is nothing to stand against it. And he seems to have grown old and weak so quickly somehow. Understand, I don't want you to frighten yourself. I only want to warn you, and myself too, that we must not expect him to live for ever, and then—'

A silence, through which they heard the soft splash of waves on the rocks far below.

'And then, Mabel,' Randal went on, for she did not speak or look at him, 'will you be glad to leave the old house where we have spent such happy days this summer? Must we go off on our different ways, and cease to be anything to each other? Or when my father goes, shall he leave two children to miss him instead of one? What do you say, Mabel darling?'

Mabel sat quite still, in a wild maze of strangely conflicting feelings. She did like Randal very much indeed, and Pensand was the only home she had ever known; she could not say that she cared for any other man, or any other place. Handsome, graceful, agreeable, kind and thoughtful from the first day of their acquaintance, and now, apparently, in love with her, there seemed to be everything in his favour, and nothing against him. Still, as she sat there blushing, and hardly able to see anything clearly in that mist of confusion, she was aware of the little doubt that Randal often brought into her mind. She did not quite understand him; she was never sure that he was in earnest, and had often wondered what it was that brought a shadow into his face sometimes, when he did not know she was looking at him. Of course he interested her; and yet she had often wished that his eyes were not so dark and deep, but more like Dick Northcote's, blue and frank, and open as the day.

'What are you thinking of, Mabel, all this time? Is there so much doubt about it?' said Randal, beginning to feel a little anxious. 'Is it quite a new idea to you? I assure you that since the first day we met I have thought of nothing else.'

Mabel had a way of honestly forgetting her own advantages, and it did not occur to her that this devotion was not quite all for herself.

'O, I am so surprised,' she said, in a very low voice. 'I can't understand it.'

'What can't you understand, dearest?' said Randal tenderly. 'But I don't care about that. I only want you to believe what I say, that my whole life depends on the answer you give me now.'

Turn your face this way, Mabel. Look at me and trust me, dear.'

Mabel did turn towards him, but their eyes did not meet. They were caught by the most unwelcome appearance of a rough-looking elderly man, whose red face and reddish-gray whiskers seemed all bristling with anger, as he came round the trees suddenly, and stood in front of them. He had a light stick in his hand, and with this he struck Randal sharply on the shoulder.

'Stand up, sir, and answer me!' he cried. 'You are a jilt and a coward!'

CHAPTER XXIII.

AN OLD LETTER.

MRS. CARDEW had been anxious about her daughter for some time; in fact, ever since her tiring walk to Pensand Castle. Flora seemed to have lost all her good-tempered serenity; she was nervous, restless, and irritable; she walked about her room at night, instead of sleeping like other people. Mrs. Cardew lay awake and listened on the other side of the wall, for her faithful affection could not rest while Flora was disturbed. She hardly dared ask what was the matter, for this seemed to annoy Flora more than anything, and the consequence generally was that she rushed out of the house and did not come back for hours, then quite exhausted and with a racking headache.

One evening, after a walk, things were worse than ever. Flora sobbed half the night, and came down the next morning with her eyes red and heavy. She was so evidently wretched that the Captain noticed it, and began asking questions in his turn.

'O, it is nothing,' said Flora impatiently. 'I have a cold, and

it kept me awake all night. That's all.'

'Then take care of yourself to-day, and don't go out,' said her father.

But instead of following this advice, Flora made that expedition to the other side of the Penyr, which ended in Dick Northcote's bringing her back to St. Denys in General Hawke's boat.

After that evening Flora's mood changed entirely, but not in a way to relieve her mother's anxiety. She seemed to be in a state of dull stony indifference. She would sit staring out of the window till her eyes became gradually wet with tears. Then, when she could not see, she would hastily wipe them away and take up some old piece of work, and stitch mechanically for a few minutes; then drop it and stare out of the window again. In the morning and evening, when her father was at home, she made little efforts to talk and be like herself, which distressed and puzzled poor Mrs. Cardew more than anything. She did not say anything to the Captain about her anxiety, fearing that he would make a fuss and annoy Flora; but she was thoroughly miserable herself, mourning over her dear beautiful girl, who had always been so good.

Flora had something terrible on her mind; that was quite clear; and the worst of it was that she would not tell her mother.

Flora had not been out for several days, and had spent her time lying on the sofa, or occupied in the melancholy way I have described, when one afternoon Mrs. Cardew came suddenly into the room and found her with her hat on, standing by the table. In front of her was a small open box, which appeared to be full of letters, tied up with ribbon in separate packets. Mrs. Cardew

just saw this before Flora shut down the lid. Then she locked it, and began packing it up in sheets of brown paper, and tying string round it with trembling fingers. Mrs. Cardew came to help her.

'No, mother, never mind,' said Flora. 'I can do it myself.'

'But your hands are so shaky, dear. Old letters! What are you doing with them?' said Mrs. Cardew, quite unable to restrain her curiosity.

'Old letters, yes,' said Flora. 'I am going to get rid of them. The best way, isn't it?'

'I should have thought the fire was the best way,' said her mother. 'Where are they going? To the North?'

'North, south, east, west—I don't know, I'm sure,' said Flora. 'For a sailor's daughter I'm weak about the points of the compass.'

'To the Lancasters, I meant,' Mrs. Cardew ventured to suggest. 'Have you heard from any of them? They *can't* want a lot of old letters. Much better put them in the fire.'

'Do you think so?' said Flora.

She had tied her string securely; she took up the box and turned towards the door.

'My dear, you are not going out?' said Mrs. Cardew anxiously.

Flora looked round and gave her a strange little nod. Then, seeing the consternation in her mother's face, she suddenly smiled, came back to her, and kissed her.

'Never mind, mother,' she said, with something like her old considerate gentleness. 'I shall soon be back. Don't trouble your mind about me, dear.'

'Ah, you make me very unhappy, Flora,' said Mrs. Cardew. 'You have no confidence in those who deserve it most—your father and me. Do you suppose you can be miserable, and we not see it?'

'Well, then,' said Flora, 'if you do see it, mother, help me to get over it by letting me alone and saying nothing. And for goodness' sake keep my father quiet, for he would drive me mad.'

'I know that, dear,' said Mrs. Cardew, sighing. 'But if you want that box to go to the station, Sarah can run down with it this minute. Don't go out yourself, Flora, to please me.'

'I must please myself for this once, mother dear,' said Flora.

She kissed her again, and went, carrying the box in her hand. Mrs. Cardew hoped it was not heavy. She looked out of the front window, and saw Flora go through the garden-gate, and turn up the hill to the right, instead of down to the left towards the station. Here was another mystery; but poor Mrs. Cardew was getting used to them.

Flora was out an hour or more. She came in without the box, and, though very tired, seemed more cheerful all the evening. But the next day she looked more miserable than ever. She did not come down to breakfast, and Mrs. Cardew was obliged to confess, in answer to the Captain's inquiries, that she thought her very ill.

'Well,' said Mrs. Cardew, with tears in her eyes, 'it's no wonder if she is ill. Sleepless nights by the dozen, and something that keeps her low and wretched all day long. Nobody could stand that for ever, and poor Flora's breaking down.'

'But what is it?' shouted the Captain, bringing down his fist on the table.

'Don't ask me, for I don't know. And don't make all that noise. I can't do anything for my poor child but nurse her to the best of my power, and it will be strange if some day she doesn't

tell her old mother everything, just for the sake of peace.'

Captain Cardew went off to Morebay as usual, and the little house was very quiet all that day. Flora came down-stairs; but she seemed weary and stupefied; she would neither speak nor eat, and lay half dozing on the drawing-room sofa.

Mrs. Cardew had lighted the fire there, as it was a cold showery day, and all through the long afternoon she stole in at intervals to look at Flora. There she lay just the same, scarcely moving or opening her eyes as her mother bent over her, looking thin and fair and delicate, and above all things tired, with lines and hues of weariness about her brow and eyes that looked as if they could hardly be done away in this world.

But the last time, to Mrs. Cardew's great relief, she was sleeping soundly; it was a pleasure to hear her regular breathing, and a softened look, almost a smile, had stolen over the poor face. The thick blinds were down, and the room was in twilight, lit up by the varying flicker of the fire. Flora lay with her head turned away from the light; a shawl was thrown over her, and the fringe of it trailed on the carpet; one of her hands was half hanging down too, with the palm upwards, and the fingers slightly curved. On the floor, partly under the fringe, lay an open letter, which might have dropped from her hand. This caught Mrs. Cardew's eye just as she turned away, with an easier heart, from watching Flora's sleeping face. She stooped instinctively and picked up the letter.

Mrs. Lancaster had led a very independent life since she came back to her parents; her friends and her correspondence were all

her own, and the old people were quite aware that she would not like any curious questioning about them. Their admiration and respect for Flora, and their faith in the strength of her character, had kept them quite contented under these circumstances. Flora took possession of her own letters every day, and showed them to nobody. She also had a habit of posting her own. Captain and Mrs. Cardew did not get many letters, or take much interest in the post at all, and Flora was as free in these ways as if she had lived alone. Her father's outburst about Dick Northcote had been quite a solitary event.

Mrs. Cardew was aware, however, when she picked up that letter, that Flora had had many in the same handwriting, small and neat and manly. The edges of this were a little worn, as if with constant reading. Mrs. Cardew, holding it open in her hand, could not help seeing the beginning. The fire just then leaped up too, and lighted the words strangely and suddenly. The letter was dated from London, more than two years before, and began, 'My own dearest Flora.'

Mrs. Cardew turned white, and laid her hand on her heart, as if to keep it quiet, for she felt a conviction, really like lightning in its sudden awfulness, that now she was going to know all. The worn letter, Flora's companion—so old, but still kept with her in her trouble—this must have something to do with the trouble itself. If Mrs. Cardew stopped to think at all, she thought that Flora's mother had a right to know what had brought her child into this state, and she read on without any doubt or hesitation.

'My own dearest Flora,—When we parted last night at your gate

after those hours of intense happiness in the Combe, I felt, as I feel now, that I should not know how to live till I saw you again. But this misery is nothing to what I suffered for so long before, till I was able to tell you what you were to me, and to have the joy of hearing that my love was returned. I scarcely feel myself worthy of such a treasure, or of your noble confidence, in consenting to keep our engagement secret for the present. I trust the need for secrecy will only last a very short time, perhaps a few weeks, till I feel myself in a position to speak to my father. You know how careful one must be with old people and their prejudices, though I have no fear of the future, for my father need only be acquainted with you to have all his prejudices done away with. Write to me constantly, my own. Among these crowds I can see no face but yours. I am very lonely, and the days will seem like years till I am with you again. I need not tell you to have perfect trust in me, my sweetest Flora. Everything shall soon be as clear as daylight, and as you tell me it is in my power to make you happy, your life shall be happier than the wildest dream. Forget everything that is sorrowful, and above all things have faith and confidence in your devoted lover,

‘RANDAL HAWKE.’

Mrs. Cardew read this letter twice through before she understood it in the least, and stared at the signature for full two minutes afterwards. Then with a deep sigh she murmured, ‘O Lord, have mercy upon us!’ and sat down in a low chair by the fire, being quite unable to stand. She sat there for some time, and read the letter once again. The clock

ticked on the mantelpiece; Flora slept on, breathing softly and evenly; light showers pattered against the south windows. At last the Captain’s firm active step came up the garden-walk, he opened and shut the house-door, and after taking off his hat and wet coat put his head into the drawing-room.

‘Is she asleep?’ asked the Captain, in a loud whisper. ‘Hallo, are you ill too? You’re as white as a ghost.’

‘O John!’ said Mrs. Cardew tremulously, ‘I’ve found out something—something so dreadful! Come here.’

‘What’s the matter now?’ said the Captain. ‘You women are always in some fuss or other;’ but he walked up to the fire, and Mrs. Cardew put the letter into his hand.

‘Read that,’ she said. ‘It is right you should know. O my poor child! What am I to do?’

She took hold of one of the Captain’s rough hands, and bowed her forehead on it as he stood beside her.

‘What! is it about Flora?’ said the Captain. ‘Who is it from? Randal Hawke! What on earth—’

‘Hush, hush! read it,’ said Mrs. Cardew.

The Captain’s eyes were slower than hers, and he was a long time getting through the letter. At first he made an amazed exclamation or two, then finished it in silence.

‘What nasty confounded under-hand business is this?’ he asked sternly, throwing back the letter into his wife’s lap. ‘Flora engaged to that young Hawke, and telling us nothing about it all this time! I don’t like it, however rich he may be. Such a sneaking affair can’t turn out well. But you need not break

your heart over it, old woman. Flora's beyond my understanding. She treated Dick Northcote shamefully.'

'O, I have no thoughts to spare for any Dicks,' said Mrs. Cardew impatiently. 'You don't see, Captain; you don't understand.'

'I'll be hanged if I do!' said the Captain, staring at her.

'Look at Flora's state. Think of the gossip we have heard about young Hawke and that Miss Ashley, the heiress, the General's ward. Now do you see? He has jilted Flora—half killed her, I think. Everything is clear now. O, I understand it all.'

The Captain looked at her hard for a moment. Then he looked at Flora as she lay on the sofa, sleeping the deep sleep of exhaustion. Then he set his teeth, stamped his foot on the floor, and brought out one or two tremendous words.

'O, don't! Be still, Captain; you'll wake her!' exclaimed Mrs. Cardew; but the mischief was done already.

Flora sat up on the sofa, pushing back her hair with both her thin hands, and stared wildly at her father and mother, as they stood there, the letter lying on the hearthrug between them.

'My darling, my own sweet child!' said Mrs. Cardew, going to her.

'What is that letter, mother?' said Flora, pointing to it.

Mrs. Cardew gave a sort of gasp. Captain Cardew picked up the letter, and held it out by one corner; they both stood still and looked at Flora.

'You have read that letter?' she said. 'How could you! It was mine.'

Neither of them answered her at once, but after a minute the Captain said, in his gruff voice,

which trembled a little, 'Shall I put it in the fire? The best place for it.'

'No; give it me,' said Flora.

She lay back on the cushion, with her two hands folded over it. Her eyes were unnaturally large in the twilight; and her father and mother stood watching her in a fascinated way, for tragedy was not a well-known element in their family history.

'You know all about it, you two, if you have read this,' she said calmly, in a low voice. 'So I am punished for keeping it. I suppose it was wrong.'

'Punished, dear!' murmured her mother.

'Yes. I was to send back all his letters. You saw them, mother. But I kept this one, because it was the first, and I did not like him to see how much it had been read. Well, it was of a piece with the rest of my folly. Are you angry with me for keeping the secret?'

'Angry, my poor Flora! My heart's breaking for you,' said Mrs. Cardew, kneeling down beside her.

'And you, father?' said Flora.

'I am angry,' said the Captain slowly; 'much more angry than I ever was in my life before. Not with you; with that scoundrel Hawke. But we'll give him a lesson. We'll bring an action for breach of promise.'

The colour came into Flora's pale face, overspreading it slowly.

'No, father,' she said. 'If you do that, I'll make an end of it all by drowning myself in the Mora. So you know what to expect. Don't be vexed with me. I really could not stand that; it would kill me.'

'Look here, Flora,' said the Captain earnestly; 'I won't say another word about that. But is that fellow who has done you all

this harm to go scot-free, and marry any one he likes, without interference from heaven or earth? It's a sinful thing, and I won't consent to it. Now, my dear, if it won't distress you, just tell your mother and me the facts of the case. You have no friends like us, remember.'

The Captain took a chair by the sofa, and sat there like an old doctor listening to a fanciful patient. Mrs. Cardew knelt on the other side, and wiped away her tears now and then, as Flora quite calmly and tearlessly told her story. The Captain ground his teeth now and then, but with wonderful self-control showed no other signs of rage.

'The girl is too good for him,' said Flora, after she had finished, and had paused for a minute or two.

'There is not a girl in England bad enough for him,' said the Captain. 'And he's to be left, is he, to marry this nice girl, with the character he chooses to give himself? You say Dick Northcote knows? Is he going to stand by and suffer that? If he is, I'm not, as sure as my name's Jack Cardew.'

'O Captain, don't be violent,' sighed his wife.

'I'm not violent,' said the Captain very truly. 'Don't you be soft and silly. You see, Flora, I'm the most reasonable man on earth; but what I say now, I mean. If that girl marries Randal Hawke, she shall do it with her eyes open. She and his father shall know this history of his engagement to you, and after that they may settle their affairs their own way. I shall speak to him first, and I shall make him confess it to them in my presence, and then I hope I may never set eyes on any of the lot again.'

Flora lay and looked at him with her sad eyes.

'I cannot have the thing made public, father. You see that. We should have to leave St. Denya.'

'Yes, my dear,' said the Captain, with extraordinary gentleness. 'But you must see yourself the justice of what I say. A man ought not to play such a trick as this without being punished for it. I shall make short work of it. I shall go to Pensand to-morrow.'

'You will? Then do keep your word, and do it quietly, and don't for goodness' sake let any of the servants be in the way,' said Flora. 'I can't bear it. It seems so odious of me.'

'It is not you at all. It is I that choose to do it. And I shall be doing right,' said Captain Cardew. 'Take care of that letter. The fellow doesn't know you have got it, probably, and he may deny the fact altogether.'

Flora did not answer. A minute or two afterwards the Captain left the room, and his wife followed him. Flora got up from her sofa, walked feebly across the room, dropped her long-treasured letter into the fire, and saw it burn to ashes.

This was how Captain Cardew came to appear before Randal and Mabel in the park at Morebay.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CAPTAIN CARDEW'S BARGAIN.

At that trying moment Randal kept his coolness and self-command.

'Go away; the man is mad,' he whispered to Mabel.

Then he started up, snatched the stick from Captain Cardew's hand, and flung it away over the edge of the cliff.

'What do you mean, Captain

Cardew?' he said. 'You are in a passion.'

The Captain's conscience smote him a little. He had meant to do this disagreeable business very coolly and quietly, but the sight of those two under the fir-trees had been suddenly too much for him.

'No, sir, I am not in a passion,' he said. 'If I was, I might send you after my stick. I wish to know what you mean by your conduct to my daughter.'

'Wait till we are alone, at any rate,' exclaimed Randal. 'You are under a mistake. I will explain; but we can't discuss the subject in this lady's hearing. Walk slowly towards the town,' he said to Mabel, in a peremptory voice that trembled in spite of himself. 'I'll overtake you; don't stay here.'

Mabel gazed at the two men in astonished horror. She had never before heard Randal speak in such a tone, in such a manner. He was in what people call a 'white rage,' and no wonder. Her look was too much for him. He came forward, seized her wrist, and almost dragged her away from Captain Cardew to the other side of the fir-trees.

'Do you hear what I say, Mabel? This man is mad; he wants to ruin me. He tells frantic lies; you must not stay here and listen.'

Mabel looked at him. She was horrified, but not the least frightened.

'He is Mrs. Lancaster's father,' she said.

'What of that?' said Randal. Then his manner suddenly changed. 'My dear Mabel, if you care for me the least, if you believe in me at all, go quietly away, and let me talk to him.'

Mabel felt as if everything was all wrong. It seemed hours ago that she and Randal had been

sitting there, that he had been saying those things so difficult to answer. Now there came the strangest feeling, as if all that had been mere play, and this at last was earnest. She had never seen Randal so disturbed, not even when Mrs. Lancaster came to them that day on the beach, a most disagreeable recollection. But of course she had nothing to say, and could only do as Randal asked her. She bowed her head very gravely, and walked away at once into the open park, where the sun was shining, and people who looked free and happy were passing up and down. Randal went back to the old Captain, who was standing with his arms folded, gazing out to sea. The little interval, the necessity of getting Mabel out of the way, had quieted them both.

'What do you wish to say to me?' said Randal, as the Captain did not at once turn or look at him.

'Is that young lady engaged to you?'

'I fail to see how that concerns you,' said Randal. 'However,' he added, after a moment's thought, 'to show you that I wish to be candid and friendly, I will tell you that she is not. May I beg that you will not mention her again.'

The Captain took no particular notice of this request.

'I hear, Mr. Randal Hawke,' he said, 'that for more than two years past you have been engaged to my daughter. She acted very foolishly in concealing such a thing from her parents, but of course that was your doing; it did not suit you that the fact should be made public. I say no more about that. If the engagement had been generally known, you would hardly have dared, sir, to back out of it in so mean and dishonourable a manner. You

would have been more careful of your character as a gentleman.'

Randal stood biting his lips, and looking at the Captain under his frowning eyebrows.

There was something so manly, straightforward, and fearless about the old sailor, especially now that he spoke with some degree of calmness, that even Randal felt obliged to respect him.

'You speak hardly, Captain Cardew,' he said. 'But I don't mean to lose my temper with you, for two reasons. First, you are Flora's father; and second, I am more sorry about this unfortunate affair than you can be. You don't imagine that I should have broken off with Flora if I had not been forced to it by necessity? I hoped that she herself perfectly understood that.'

'I don't know what she understood,' said Captain Cardew. 'She only knows, as I do, that you have jilted her in a cruel and cowardly manner, to make a marriage more advantageous for yourself. She is ill, and I shouldn't wonder if she was fool enough to pine away and die—I didn't mean to tell you that, though. And you will be good enough in future to call her Mrs. Lancaster, if you speak of her at all. Flora is for her own people.'

'Yes, I beg your pardon,' said Randal, with wonderful meekness. He looked at the Captain, as if waiting for what more he had to say.

'I assure you, sir,' said the old sailor more fiercely, 'that few men would take this affair so quietly as I do. You may think yourself lucky to escape an action for breach of promise.'

Randal stroked his moustache, and was silent.

'What have you to say for yourself?' demanded the Captain.

'I am sorry you and Mrs. Lancaster have taken the thing

up in this way,' said Randal. 'She and I had a long explanation on the subject. I pointed out to her that our engagement would be endless and hopeless. I am not in a position to marry a woman without fortune. Therefore it would have been injustice to her, and misery for both of us, if the thing had dragged on any longer. You yourself could not have wished it for her.'

'I should not have wished it for her at all, under any circumstances,' said the Captain. 'Not if you had been a duke's son, Mr. Randal, and the richest man in the kingdom.'

Randal bowed slightly. He thought this interview tiresome and useless, if nothing worse.

'Then,' he said, 'don't you think we had better say no more about it? Of course I understand your displeasure, and am very sorry to be the cause of it. But Mrs. Lancaster and I talked it over the other day, and quite understood each other. I fancy she would wish the whole thing to be forgotten. These mistakes are constantly made, and people get over them.'

'I hope they do,' said the Captain. 'But some people think that the world was made for their pleasure only, and they have to be shown their mistake. Now, sir, what do you expect me to do?'

Randal stared; he could not quite make out what the old fellow was driving at. But he thought if both sides kept their temper, the affair might blow over without much more mischief.

'Well, Captain Cardew,' he said, with a faint smile, 'you say that under no circumstances you would have liked me for a son-in-law. So I think you might accept my apologies and very sincere regrets,—shake hands, and say no more about it.'

'O, that's what you think?' said the Captain, looking at him hard.

'Yes. And I know Mrs. Lancaster's generous character too well,' said Randal more gravely, 'to believe for a moment that she would wish anything else.'

'So your good fortune is to be built up on her generosity? Very good,' said the Captain. 'Well, you might have a chance with her, I daresay; women are so good-natured. But that's not exactly my view; I can't let you off so easily as that.'

'Explain yourself, please,' said Randal.

He began walking up and down the small space between the trees and the cliff. Captain Cardew stood like a solid old rock, following him with his eyes.

'Your character in this neighbourhood would be a good deal affected, sir, if this story was known,' said the Captain. 'I have it in my hands, you must remember.'

'Very obliging of you to say so,' said Randal, with a perceptible snarl in his voice. He felt that this dreadful father of Flora's would soon make an end of his patience.

'You've told me what you expect me to do,' the Captain went on. 'To shake hands and say no more about it. I think that's hardly reasonable. Now I'll tell you what I expect you to do. Nothing for Flora. You have done your worst by her. If I have my way, she shall never be troubled by thought or word of you again.'

'Well, what?' said Randal, still pacing up and down.

'I don't mean,' said the Captain, 'to mention the affair to anybody.'

'All parties will be obliged to you,' said Randal.

'Stop a moment, sir; I have not done yet. I shall insist on one thing, as a condition of my saying nothing. Your father shall be told, as well as the young lady you mean to marry. You will tell them both in my presence. Then if the young lady chooses to marry you, she will do it with her eyes open.'

Randal stood still and looked at him with an angry scowl.

'You won't insist on that?' he said. 'What good can it do you?'

'None whatever,' said the Captain. 'I shall insist upon it.'

'You might as well tell the whole place at once.'

'As you please, sir.'

'I would rather you did,' said Randal.

He was in such a rage that it was with the greatest difficulty he kept himself quiet, and did not knock the Captain down. But a little prudence still remained, and warned him not to put himself still farther in the wrong. For a minute or two it seemed to him that he was irretrievably ruined. Captain Cardew did not press him, or take him at his word, but let him stand there biting his moustache and staring at the sea. Tell everybody! All the gossips in St. Denys, all his acquaintance in the county, Anthony Strange, Dick Northcote! That last idea was insupportable. Then there was this other plan, to confess to his father and Mabel. Well, he thought he could manage his father, but Mabel was the difficulty. She was hardly sure of him now, and she was a girl of some character and strong prejudices. Still, it ought to touch a girl's heart, he thought, to find out what a scrape he had got into for her sake. He believed he had a great influence over Mabel, and having her to himself at Pensand, surely she might be brought round

in time. If only he could speak to her again first, and bring that scene to a close which Captain Cardew had so inopportunistically broken in upon. Yes, on the whole he believed that his enemy's plan was the least fatal of the two. 'Very well,' he said, with a half laugh, which made the old Captain look more grim than ever. 'If you insist upon it, let it be so. You had better come over to Pensand to-morrow, and we will do the thing solemnly.'

'I see nothing to laugh at,' said Captain Cardew. 'But I can't waste my time going to Pensand; my work is here at Morebay. Your father and the young lady are here. Why not do it here, and to-day?'

'Look here,' said Randal. 'I will tell them to-day, if you like; but why should you insist on being present?'

'I mean to be present, sir,' said the Captain. 'And the least you can do is to consent.'

'I must consent, of course,' said Randal. 'But it is understood that after this interesting scene you will let the affair drop completely. I shall never be twitted with it again?'

'That was my intention,' said the Captain. 'I've some notion of the meaning of two old words, honour and conscience. They had dropped out of the dictionary before you went to school, Mr. Randal.'

'If you wish to see my father this afternoon,' said Randal, 'you can meet us at the George at half-past five.'

'I shall be there,' said Captain Cardew.

Randal found Mabel, who, of course, did not know her way about the town, sitting on a bench at the other side of the park, near the band and the people, many of

whom looked at her curiously; it seemed as if such a helpless, peculiar-looking little person was hardly fit to be alone.

'Here I am at last,' said Randal, as she got up to join him. 'Come along; I don't want that old fool to overtake us. Poor old man! You think it wrong of me to call him names, but if he had been prosing away at you for the last half hour, after interrupting us just at that moment! You are tired, dear; take my arm.'

Randal seemed strangely disturbed and excited. Mabel looked at him with her eyes full of wondering reproach. Those few words that the Captain had said to Randal in her hearing had repeated themselves ever since. 'You are a jilt and a coward. I wish to know what you mean by your conduct to my daughter.' They had mixed themselves with the merry tunes that the band was playing; such words were never set to such music before. Could it be that Mabel had been walking all this time blindfold near a precipice, and that those rough words of the old sea-captain had come to warn her just in time? Mabel's meditations went very near the truth as she sat there, scarcely hearing the band or seeing the gaily-dressed crowd of people. When Randal came back to her she had nothing to say to him. She did not take his arm; they walked slowly together along a stone terrace facing the sea, and for some time both were silent.

'Mabel,' said he at last, 'have you been thinking at all of what I asked you?'

'O yes,' said Mabel.

'You dear sweet girl! Forgive me for tormenting you, but I can't think or speak of anything else till I have your answer. You do care for me, Mabel, don't you? I am not mistaken?'

'O, I don't know. Don't ask me now,' said Mabel, in a low voice.

'Then I am very hopeful,' said Randal. 'You would say no at once if you disliked me. If you are not sure *that way*, it is all right.'

Probably Mabel had never heard the old French proverb about '*Château qui parle, et femme qui écoute*,' but there was something in Randal's hopefulness which frightened her at once. She looked up at him very gravely.

'You must not be hopeful,' she said; 'I can't let you.'

'How can you help it, my dear child?' said Randal.

'Don't speak to me like that, please,' said Mabel, giving herself an impatient little shake. 'It is very hard for me,' she went on, after a moment's pause, in a tired unhappy voice. 'I have been alone all this time. I have had no friends, nobody to take care of me or advise me, nobody even to speak the truth to me, it seems. I must take care of myself, though I am so young. You won't see that.'

'I do see it, most clearly,' said Randal. 'But the unfortunate circumstances—I have done my best to keep you from feeling friendless, and I want to give you my whole life, if you will only let me. The truth, dear Mabel? I don't quite know what you mean.'

'O yes, you do,' said Mabel, with a trembling voice.

Randal did not speak for a minute. Then he said, 'Well, Mabel, I am not a perfect character, it is true; not nearly good enough for a sweet girl like you. But you will soon know the worst of me.'

Mabel wondered what he could mean, but did not ask him, and he did not explain himself. They strolled slowly on towards the

hotel, where they were to meet the General.

When the chimes from the clock tower said that it was half-past five they were all three sitting in a pleasant up-stairs room looking out into the chief square of Morebay. Tea had been brought, and Mabel had poured it out, and was now leaning back in her chair in a little dream. The General also seemed tired, and was reading the paper. Randal had opened the window and gone out into the balcony. Suddenly, as the chimes ceased, he stepped back into the room.

'Father,' he said, 'Captain Cardew is coming in.'

Mabel was roused, and gazed at him anxiously. The General also looked up in some surprise, for there was a curious tone in Randal's voice, a slight tremor very unusual with him.

'Anything wrong?' said the General. 'Why shouldn't he come in? The George is free to everybody.'

'He is coming here to see you,' said Randal.

He did not look at Mabel, though she was watching him with painful intensity.

'What a bore!' said General Hawke. 'Did you know he was coming?'

'Yes.'

'Then you might have prevented it. Mabel and I are resting ourselves.'

'He won't be here long. He thinks it a matter of necessity,' said Randal.

The door was opened, and Captain Cardew came in. Mabel left her chair at the table, and retreated to the farthest window, where she sat down. There was an awkward moment of silence, after the General had shaken hands with Captain Cardew.

'You have some business with

me?" said the General, in a friendly manner.

"Your son will explain it," answered the old Captain, waving his hand towards Randal.

"What is all this about, Randal?" said General Hawke, with some impatience. "Shall we go down into the coffee-room?"

He made a sign with his eyebrows in the direction of Mabel.

"Captain Cardew wishes Miss Ashley to be here," said Randal.

"Look sharp, then," said the General.

It is difficult not to pity Randal, for certainly never was a young man in a more awkward position.

"I have something to tell you, sir," he said to his father. "You won't interrupt me, I hope, till I have done. Sit down, Captain Cardew."

"Thank you; I'll stand," said the Captain.

General Hawke sat in his arm-chair, frowning with amazement. Mabel trembled in the background. Randal stood with his back to the light, and both hands on a chair, quite composed and cool.

"You always knew," he said, addressing his father, "that I had a great admiration for Mrs. Lancaster, Captain Cardew's daughter. But you did not know that I had been engaged to her. Our engagement lasted for two years, and was only broken off the other day."

"Who broke it off, sir? Who backed out of it?" said Captain Cardew.

"It was not in the bond that you should ask me questions," said Randal. "However, the fact is, I broke it off. It was a foolish affair from the beginning."

"Foolish on both sides," said the Captain. "But only bad and heartless on one."

"Look here, Captain Cardew," said Randal, stepping forward, "I have done what we agreed on. You will oblige me by making no farther remarks. It would be better if you were to leave us."

Captain Cardew took no notice of these words, or of the young man's flashing eyes and angry movement. He looked at the General, who was leaning back in his chair, turning his eyes in a vague way from one to the other.

"This is the only compensation I have asked from your son, sir," he said, "for his behaviour to my daughter. We on our side shall say no more about it, and the sooner his friends forget it, the better for him."

"Can't you leave us now, as I asked you?" said Randal. "You have had your will, and my father is not fit to talk to you."

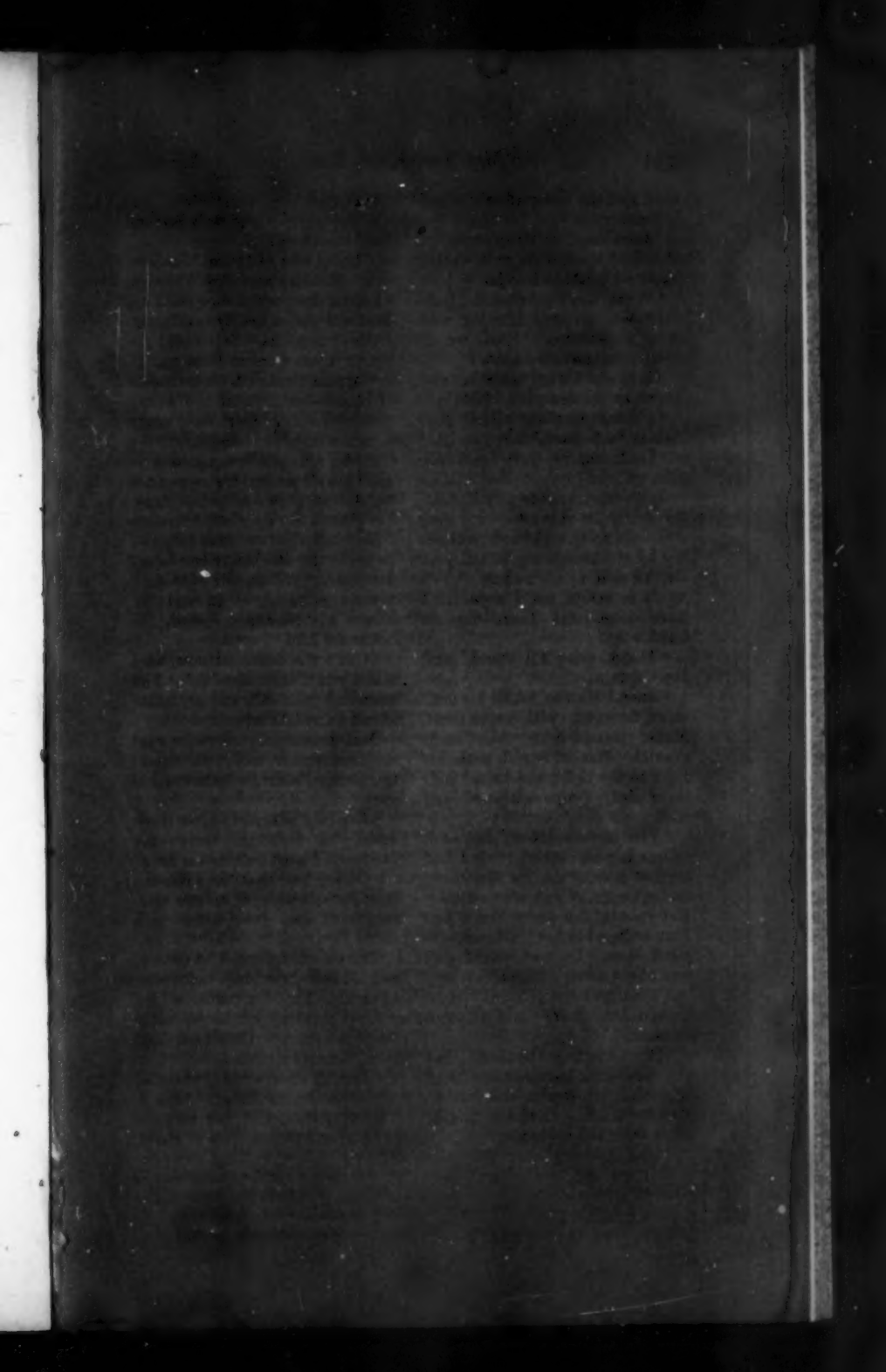
Mabel suddenly came forward from her corner, and took one of the General's hands between her own.

"Randal," he said, in a low thick voice, "I feel ill. Order the carriage. I must go home at once."

"Do you hear that?" said Randal, in a furious whisper, to the Captain. "Come down-stairs with me."

The two men went out together, and Mabel was left with the General. For a minute he did not speak, but stared vacantly across the room. Then he looked up at her and smiled.

"Randal always talks nonsense, my dear," he muttered. "He is a funny fellow, but you may depend upon him, in spite of that."





VINTAGING SHERRY FOR SENOR NUSA IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF JEREZ.



SENOR MISA'S BODEGA GRANDE.

A WINE WE ALL DRINK.

To point out a verbal connection between the wine called sherry and a Roman emperor might appear at the first blush a mere attempt to rival that ardent philologist who insisted on tracing the derivation of pickled cucumber from a Jewish prophet through the following filiation: King Jeremiah—Jeremiah King—Jerry King—gherkin—pickled cucumber. Yet if we are strictly to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, amongst them must be counted the name of the wine in question. Every schoolboy of the Macaulayan standard knows that sherry takes its name from the chief seat of its production, the town of Jerez de la Frontera in Andalusia. But the Roman name of the said town happened to be *Cæsar's Asidona*. This the Arabs converted into *Cæris Sidonia*, and the Spaniards in turn into Jerez, whence we English have derived the word *sheris* or sherry.

Here is a hint for the antiquarian diner-out. He can open up a magnificent field of historical speculation with the first glass of Amontillado, immediately after the soup.

He might intimate that the wines of *Bætica* were deemed worthy of honourable mention by more than one Latin writer, and that traces yet existing prove that some of the Jerez vineyards date from the days when Spain ranked as a Roman province. *Praefecti* and *proconsules* consoled themselves with their produce for their enforced exile from the Seven Hilled City and the absence of their beloved *Falernian*, which itself, according to the erudite Dr. Henderson, presented all the characteristics of a well-matured brown sherry of the old Jerezano type, deepening in colour with age, and becoming aromatic and rich in pungent bitterness. Caesar himself, who did some hot fighting in this region,

may have quaffed the local vintage with approbation. To Vandal chieftains and Gothic kings it proved equally grateful; but when the power of Don Roderick was shattered on the banks of the Guadalete, and the turbaned hordes of Tarik and Muza spread throughout the length and breadth of the Iberian peninsula, the slaughter of the unbeliever and the uprooting of his vineyard appeared acts of equal merit in the eyes of these stern followers of the Prophet. Their more degenerate descendants were, however, less abstemious; for when, by the help of good San Dionisio, King Alfonso the Wise finally planted the standard of the cross on the walls of Cæris Sidonia, he was able to reward each of the forty hidalgos who settled in the conquered territory in 1268, under Nuño de Lara, with six aranzadas—or as much land as a pair of oxen could plough in a week—of already flourishing vineland. And to these the monarch, who had not disdained to handle the pruning-knife with Diego Perez de Vargas, was careful to add another six aranzadas expressly for planting with vines. From that time forward, despite the desolation wrought by Moorish incursions and the fearful pestilences of the middle ages, the vineyards of Jerez continued to extend their boundaries year after year. There is ample testimony amongst the records of the 'most noble and most loyal city' as to the importance of the traffic in their produce, and the acceptability of the said produce to the knights and nobles whom Ferdinand and Isabella led to the siege of Granada, and to the hardy adventurers who swarmed in the track of Columbus to dare the unknown perils of the New World.

As to the date when sherry first

reached England, it can only be a matter of conjecture. There are frequent references to the 'white wine of Spain' in the *Liber Albus* and other civic records of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and old Geoffrey Chaucer has celebrated the stealthily intoxicating effects of 'the wine of Lepe,' a port to the westward of Jerez. The troubled reign of the sixth Henry was further disturbed by the complaints of sundry Spanish merchants anent the seizure of their wine-laden argosies, and the year of Richard Crookback's accession is noted by the Jerez historian, Cardenas, as one in which the price of wine fell, in consequence of the non-arrival of the English vessels that were wont to visit the port annually in quest of it. And looking at the connection between England and Spain, brought about by Henry VII. and Ferdinand the Catholic, we may fairly assume that the vintage of Jerez warmed the cold blood of the first Tudor, and inflamed that of his hot-tempered son.

But it is under the maiden queen and her pawkie successor that sherry reaches the acme of historical importance. The gallants who followed Essex and Esfingham to the sack of Cadiz, and the stout sea-dogs who helped Hawkins and Frobisher to singe the beards of the Dons on the Western Main, had ample opportunities of becoming acquainted with the genuine juice of the Jerez grape in the cellars of the Gaditanians and the holds of captured galleons; and when more peaceful days arrived, gladly fought their battles o'er again, over a brimming measure of the same amber-hued fluid. Sherry found favour with all the great Elizabethan soldiers, sailors, scholars, and statesmen. It fired the hearts of the men who fought the Armada and defied the

Pope, the devil, and the Spaniard, who lived like Francis Drake and died like Richard Grenville. It stirred the ponderous brain of Burleigh and quickened the keen intellect of Walsingham, oiled the bitter tongue of Coke, and helped to point the agile toe of Hatton. It spurred the mighty mind of Bacon and the sprightly fancy of high-souled Sidney. It cheered Spenser in his Irish solitude and Raleigh in his gloomy prison. In sherry courtly Leicester pledged his royal mistress amidst the revels of Kenilworth, and hare-brained Essex drained a goblet of the same liquid topaz to her health before laying his head upon the scaffold. And what does not literature owe to a beverage which a contemporary poet describes as enabling writers 'to versify most ingeniously without much cudgeling of brains'? What quaint conceits and nimble fancies do we not owe to the Jerez grape on the part of those who 'outwatched the Bear' under the presidency of Rare Ben in the Apollo Room of the Devil Tavern, or joined in mad revelry at the Mermaid till the very atmosphere grew electric with the wit of poets, dramatists, and sages? Surely Falstaff's eulogium of the wine—which he maintained dried up all the foolish, dull, and crudy vapours environing the brain, illumined the face and impelled the heart to deeds of courage—could only have been penned by the Bard of Avon from an honest conviction of its excellent merits, acquired when 'the sup of sherry sack hung at his muchato.'

Glorious as was this apogee of sherry, it was destined to suffer an eclipse. In the days of Charles and Cromwell, Canary ruled the roast, the beaux and sparks of the Restoration brought French wines into fashion, and then came the

Methuen Treaty and the War of Succession. Mountain Malaga and Lisbon were the white wines in vogue during the eighteenth century, and Madeira and Vidonia at the commencement of the nineteenth; for though sherry began to be imported in largely increased quantities from 1790, it remained to a certain extent under a cloud till about 1820, when the First Gentleman in Europe 'damned Madeira as gouty,' and gave the wine of Jerez a position it has ever since so worthily maintained.

The Jerez vineyards proper are upwards of 15,000 acres in extent, and are distributed over a tract of undulating country some $12\frac{1}{2}$ miles long by 10 broad, with the town standing in the midst. Those scattered over the plain in the immediate vicinity of the sherry capital, and particularly to the north and north-east, and the soil of which is known as *barro-arenoso*, a sandy clay combined with oxide of iron, produce wines of very ordinary qualities; while the more distant vineyards covering the chalky slopes and ridges of the outlying amphitheatre of hills, the compact soil of which is termed *albariza*, yield wines of the highest character, developing in course of time a remarkable variety of flavour. Wines of an intermediate, yet coarse, quality are yielded by the vineyards of the lower slopes and valleys, the dark alluvial soil of which is styled *bugeo*. Altogether there are upwards of 140 *pagos de viñas* or *crus*, and conspicuous amongst the vinelands lying northward are the famous districts of Macharnudo and Carrascal, the latter deriving its name from the evergreen oaks which are to-day notable by their absence.

Westward of Jerez, and in the direction of San Lucar, is the celebrated Balbaina district, already

famous in the fifteenth century, thanks to the skill of the monks of Santo Domingo, to whom its vineyards chiefly belonged, and who encountered friendly rivals in the Carthusians, builders of the still stately, though shattered, pile known as La Cartuja, situate, with its vast bodega, in the neighbourhood of Jerez, on the banks of the Guadalete, and in full view of the plain where one of the decisive battles of the world was fought, which resulted in the defeat of Roderick, the last of the Gothic kings. The vineyards formerly belonging to the monastery lie some distance off in a northerly direction, and retain to-day, in connection with their old name of Las Viñas de la Cartuja, some of their ancient reputation. To the east of the sherry capital lie the pagos of Canaleja, Badalejo, and Caulina, reputed the oldest of the Jerez vineyards. It was amongst these that Jussuf of Granada pitched his camp, when in the reign of Sancho el Bravo (1285) he assailed Jerez at the head of 20,000 men.

At vintage time the lonely sandy roads, bordered by hedges of prickly pear, and flanked by olive-groves and by shady avenues leading to snow-white villas embowered in flowering shrubs and trees, are more or less alive with huge wheeled bullock-carts laden with butts of newly-pressed mosto, and mules bearing paniers of dust-covered grapes. In the open fields are herds of goats and oxen feeding off the scanty stubble, while herds of swine batten on the refuse of the wine-press. The summits of the hills are mostly crowned with snow-white *casas de viñas*, while the vineyards themselves are thronged with vintagers, sturdy, ragged, picturesque-looking fellows in broad *sombreros* and trousers of eccentric pattern, and in-

variably with bright crimson or scarlet sashes round their waists. Only in the outlying districts which help to swell the great sherry supply are the vintagers of the softer sex. The bunches of grapes which they deftly lop off with their ever-ready *navajas* recall by their size those brought by Joshua's spies from the Promised Land. The grapes are flung into small square wooden boxes known as *tinetas*, which when filled are carried by the men on their heads to the *almijar*, an open court adjacent to the *casa de la viña*. Here they are spread out to dry in the sun on circular mats of esparto for from one to three days, after all the blighted berries have been carefully removed.

The pressing of the grapes usually takes place at night, on account of the cooler temperature giving less chance of precipitate fermentation. The press-house is ordinarily a low tiled building with a brick floor, having ranged along it a row of large wooden troughs about ten feet square and two deep, raised a yard or so from the ground, each having an upright screw of wood or iron fitted in the centre, and a broad wooden spout in front. These receptacles, known as *tagares*, having been partially filled with grapes, which in turn have been lightly sprinkled over with gypsum, a couple of bare-legged fellows in short drawers, striped shirts, and heavily hob-nailed shoes, jump into each of them, and after carefully spreading the bunches with wooden shovels, are soon merrily footing it ankle deep in crushed fruit, whilst the expressed juice pours forth from the spout through a strainer into a large tub placed to receive it. The grapes, after being thoroughly trodden, are shovelled into a heap at one corner of the *lagar* and replaced by fresh ones,

which undergo the same process, till a sufficient quantity of 'murk' has been accumulated for the screw to be brought into play. The trodden grapes, having been built up into a kind of column round the screw by the aid of hands and shovels, are carefully swathed round and round from base to summit with a band of esparto, about four inches in width. Two thick wooden slabs are then bolted together over the top of the pile, with the nut of the screw immediately above them. The handles of the beam being rapidly turned, the slab descends, and the juice gushes forth in abundance from between the interstices of the esparto. Gradually the work becomes harder and harder, till the men, by straining every muscle, are only able to move the handles—to which they have attached their wrists to save themselves from falling, in case they should slip—by a series of jerks a few inches forward at a time. As the tub beneath the spout of the lagar fills, its contents are transferred by the aid of a bucket and funnel to a butt placed alongside. These butts when filled are hoisted upon bullock-carts, and after zigzag metal tubes have been inserted in their bung-holes to admit of the escape of the carbonic acid generated in the fermenting *mosto*, they are sent jolting along over the loose sandy roads to the Jerez bodegas.

At Jerez the be all and end all of human existence is wine, and the inhabitants seem to be generally of the opinion, not that sherry is made to be consumed by mankind, but that mankind was created to consume sherry. The town, however, is not without its attractions. The tourist will be struck by the general air of prosperity which it presents; by its broad streets bordered with acacias and orange-trees; its numerous

little plazas gay with floral parterres, or shaded with umbrageous foliage; its picturesque market-places; its pleasant Alameda, the dazzling whiteness of its houses, the emerald brightness of their *rejas* and balconies, and the cool inner courts of the more pretentious among them, set off with tropical plants and plashing fountains.

The antiquary will delight in the remains of the crenelated ramparts, whence Ebn Tlamet and his wallis bid defiance to Ferdinand the Saint; the old Moorish alcazar, half palace and half fortress; the quaintly-sculptured façade of the ancient Casas Consistoriales, the Gothic richness of San Miguel, the vast nave of San Mateo, and the crumbling tower of San Dionisio, where yet hangs the bell that was wont of old to peal forth its alarm-note when the Moors were afield. The student of human nature will be interested in the ceaseless succession of types and the gay pictures of Southern life and manners presented beneath the brightest of skies. But one and all will admit that the deepest and most lasting impression of Jerez is that produced upon the palate by its glorious wine, and upon the eye by the series of vast bodegas which gird it round like a rampart, being scattered about the old Moorish quarter, and lying close alike to the ancient walls, the bull-ring, and the railway-station.

On alighting at the latter place, one of the first objects that attracts a stranger's eye is a lofty square tower rising above an extensive range of buildings, the exterior aspect of which denotes the careful order that prevails within. These are the premises of Señor Manuel Misa, Conde de Bayona; and some idea of their extent may be gathered from the fact that the

eleven bodegas, with the offices, cooperage, carpenter's and smith's shops, engine-house, department for seasoning and steaming casks, store-rooms, and other appendages of a first-class shipping establishment, cover an area of more than eight acres. At Jerez colossal establishments are the rule; and Señor Misa's, which is of the first importance, may be fairly taken as a typical one. A ramble through it will give the reader an idea, not merely of the importance and multiplicity of the business carried on by a large sherry shipper, but of the numerous stages through which sherry has to pass, and the careful treatment it receives in the bodega, ere it is fit to please the palate of those gentlemen of England who sip at home at ease.

But first of all let us give a short explanation of the meaning of the word 'bodega.' Before describing, however, what a bodega is, it may be well to point out what it is not. Bodega, to the majority of readers familiar with the numerous establishments under this name which, by the sale of good wine, Messrs. Lavery have rendered so popular in England, may possibly convey the idea of a building of somewhat ornate architecture, within which wine is retailed by the glass over a wooden counter. The Jerez bodega is, however, nothing of the kind. It is a lofty and capacious store, the local substitute for a cellar, built on a level with the ground, and ordinarily entered through a fore-court or garden. It is usually divided into from three to five aisles by rows of pillars, and is well lighted and ventilated, the rays of the fierce southern sun being, however, carefully excluded by shutters or blinds of esparto. Many of the Jerez bodegas are sufficiently long to admit of a hundred butts of wine

lying side by side in a single row, and as the butts are commonly ranged in three and sometimes in four tiers, and as each aisle has casks stacked along either side, some idea may be formed of the number of butts of sherry housed beneath a single roof.

We have witnessed the birth and noted the parentage of sherry. It now becomes necessary to say something respecting its education. The converse of the poets whom it has so often inspired, it may be said to be made, not born. Its qualities have to be slowly brought out under most careful supervision, and the bodega is the seminary in which this takes place. We have seen the mosto transferred to casks, and removed to Jerez on bullock-carts. As with a boy freshly brought to school, symptoms of discontent, which assume the form of fermentation, manifest themselves. The new-comers are therefore carefully stored apart, in cool isolated bodegas, lest these symptoms should spread to their more matured co-disciples. Here they remain till the ensuing February or March, when they are drawn off their lees into new casks, and indoctrinated with a certain proportion of spirit in the shape of *aguardiente*, or grape brandy, usually from one to four per cent.

The wine now enters into a transition period, during which, despite the care bestowed, it is especially liable to be attacked by the diseases of childhood in the form of a tendency to turn into vinegar—sometimes to be checked by a timely course of tonics in the shape of spirit—or the development of scuddiness. The final result is, that just as we see children of the same family, educated together, turning out one a genius, a second a scapegrace, a third a man of plain common

sense, and a fourth a fool, so do butts of sherry from the same vineyard, and experiencing precisely the same treatment, develop totally different characteristics. From ten to twenty per cent will become irremediably bad. Of the rest some remain to the end of the chapter *vinos finos*, pale, dry, soft, delicate, and fresh-tasting. Others, passing through the *fino* stage, attain the dignity of *amontillados*, deeper in colour, stouter, dryer, more pungent, and possessing a marked ethereal flavour. Others, again, develop into *olorosos*, the classic wine of Jerez, darker, fuller, richer, and mellow, with a nutty flavour and an exquisite bouquet. Wines below the rank of *finos* are classed in the slang of the *bodega* as *single*, *double*, and *triple rayas*, a title derived from the chalk marks on their butts—the fewer the lines the higher being the quality. Sometimes the wines are kept intact in their butts, but as a rule they matriculate in their fourth year of residence, and are admitted to the dignity of forming part of a *solera*—a term the meaning of which we will proceed to explain.

A *solera* is a system peculiar to the sherry district of building up new wines on the foundation of old ones. As the older wines are drawn off for sale, the deficiency in the butts is made good with wine of the same character, but a year or so younger, whose place is supplied in like manner by a still younger growth, and this process is continued all down the scale. The butts are never more than half emptied, nor is the deposit at their bottoms by any chance removed. The *solera madre*, or butt containing the oldest wine, is often of great age, and hence the system necessitates the possession of an immense stock and corresponding capital; but at the

same time it enables the shipper to keep up the uniform excellence of his wines, despite a succession of bad vintages.

At Señor Misa's establishment, after passing through the counting-house, and the rooms where brokers are received, and the wines they offer tasted, the shipping sample-room attracts attention. Lining its walls from floor to ceiling are shelves on which are ranged twelve thousand samples of wine, representing the export orders executed during the past five years. On each individual sample a label sets forth the number of the invoice—a reference to which will indicate the exact character of the wine—the quantity shipped, the date, and the name of the consignee. Hence, whenever an order has to be repeated, the sample, like a photographer's negative, enables it to be exactly reproduced. Proceeding onwards, to the lofty tile-roofed *bodegas*, with their freshly whitewashed walls and bright green doors and shutters, we pass from the glowing sunshine into a cool interior, where the light is mellowed, and the air redolent with aromatic perfume. This is the *Bodega Antigua*, containing six lofty aisles, along the sides of which are ranged, in triple tiers, 3000 butts of wine in *soleras*, including *finos* of from five to forty years of age, *amontillados* from the *pagos* of *Balbaina*—which won commendation from King Alfonso, when he visited these stores—and *olorosos* from the *Carascal* and *Macharnudo* districts; conspicuous amongst them being the Royal *solera*, only replenished by choice vintages fully ten years old, the *Venturita solera*, and another 'founded' in 1824 by the grandfather of Señor Misa's present capataz. These vinous treasures pale, however, before those

of the adjacent Bodega Chica. Only 800 butts here find room, but they contain the oldest wines; the 'fundamental' soleras of the house, including the Treinta Gargollo fino purchased thirty-three years ago, and even then of acknowledged antiquity; the oloroso known as the Non plus ultra, dating from the year of Waterloo; the amontillado of 1820; and two magnificent finos baptised, though not with water, Elena and Paquita, after Señor Misa's wife and daughter. Gazing at all these rare wines, we recall how Napoleon, on his departure for Elba, regretting his inability to bid an individual farewell to each of the Old Guard, solemnly embraced General Petit as their representative. Which butt, we ask ourselves, shall serve us for General Petit. Our guide, venecia in hand (the said venecia being a strip of whalebone a yard in length, with a silver receptacle at the end) awaits our choice. *Place aux dames!* We solicit an introduction to the Señorita Paquita. The bung removed, the venecia deftly descends into the butt, to be quickly withdrawn, when its contents are jerked with a dexterous switch—to be admired, but certainly not imitated—into the wine-glass which our guide holds in his other hand. An ambrosial odour assails the nostrils, and a fresh-tasting delicate almond-flavour gratifies the palate. A single substitute for General Petit not sufficing, we next seek introductions to the illustrious Señor Amontillado, and that noble hidalgo Don Oloroso.

Bodega follows bodega, divided into the same lofty aisles, by tall columns of masonry, having the same ranges of butts, with their heads chalked over with mystic hieroglyphs denoting their contents—the 'palm-leaf' of the deve-

loping amontillado, the 'cut stick' of the future oloroso, or the perpendicular lines of the confirmed single, double, or triple raya—the same air of neatness and order being everywhere apparent; we pass the same groups of natty-looking arrumbadores in small caps, coloured shirts, light trousers, and gay crimson sashes, drawing off wine in iron-bound wooden pitchers, styled jarras, or laboriously hoisting butts into position on the upper tiers, by means of sloping skids and ropes. If the butts in these bodegas all have a family resemblance, there is, nevertheless, a marked difference in their contents; for, owing to the varying demands of the English, American, Canadian, Australian, and Scandinavian markets, the 22,000 butts of sherry which Señor Misa commonly keeps in stock comprise no less than eighty distinct varieties of wine. Here are also vino dulce used for imparting softness and mellowness, with muscatels and wines from the outlying districts of Chiclana and Seville, and vinos bajos kept merely for seasoning new casks. Glancing at the little Fondo and Lara Bodegas; the Bodega Nueva; the irregularly-built Fontan Bodega, stored with Pedro Jimenez, the Peter-see-me of the old English dramatists; the Bérrio Bodega, with its 3000 butts of vinos de cabeceos and añadas; and the Badel Bodega, where 2500 butts of Jerezano wines are stored, amongst them sundry specimens of East India sherry that would make an alderman's mouth water, —we gain the cool cathedral-like interior of the vast Bodega Grande, 450 feet long, 140 broad, and 50 high. Amongst the 8000 butts lining its six aisles in quadruple tiers are light and delicate soleras of Montilla, the so-styled

'godmother of Amontillado,' from the Cibra district, and the *pagos* of Los Zapateros, and soleras of fragrant manzanilla from the finest vineyards of San Lucar. Under the exterior arcade of the Bodega Grande, which looks on to a spacious paved court, bordered with orange-trees, and encumbered with immense stacks of oak-staves, are numbers of casks undergoing the triple process of seasoning with steam, wine, and water. The clang of hammers and thud of adzes announce the proximity of the cooperage, an important adjunct to a Jerez shipping establishment, where oak from the United States and hoop-iron from England are converted by a hundred workmen into casks of various sizes.

Another busy spot is the Bodega de Extraccion, where wines are placed in casks for shipment, and which forms an index to the rest of the establishment, the four to five thousand butts it contains comprising specimens of every kind of wine in stock, fined and ready for being blended. For though the varieties of natural sheries are infinite, their flavour is far too dry and pungent for the majority of tastes, and the British sherry-drinker, as a rule, demands wines softened by judicious blending. In this Señor Misa's head capataz—upon whom devolves in the poetical language of Andalusia the duty of 'bedewing the soleras,' in other words the replenishment of the butts with suitable wine in proportion as they are emptied—displays those special qualities which have earned for him the title of 'the Palate of the Bodega.' Taking a glass cylinder graduated into forty divisions representing the number of jarras required to make a butt, he composes in this, after a due amount of sniffing, tasting, and

rejecting, a mixture fulfilling the required conditions as to style, quality, and price. The proportions of the blend being chalked on a slate, the butts are ranged in readiness, with funnels fitted into their bung-holes. An arrumbador now extracts the bung from a store butt containing the wine forming the first item in the blend with a hooked spike, pops in a cane spigot closed by a cork, and removing this cork, slips jarra after jarra in swift succession beneath the stream of wine with such wonderful dexterity as never to spill a single drop. His companions empty their jarras into the butts in the proportion required, and then item number two is drawn off in the same manner. The butts, when nearly filled, have their contents examined and corrected if necessary; and after being marked and branded, are ready for despatch along the railway siding which joins the main line running direct to the Trocadero mole near Cadiz, whence they are shipped to their destination.

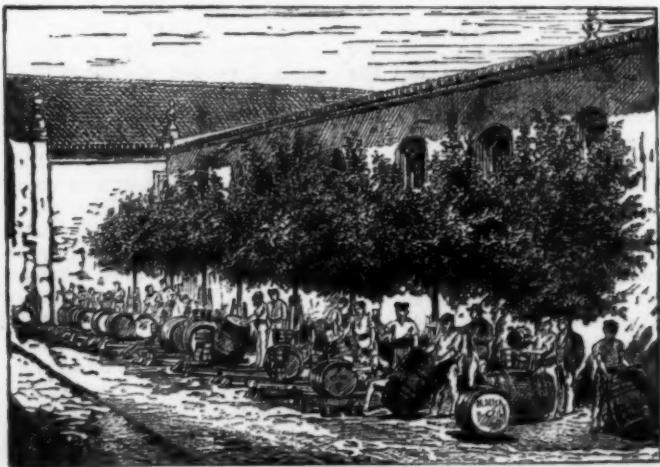
As already mentioned, the wine we know as sherry is not exclusively produced in the Jerez vineyards, the extent of demand and limit of supply rendering it necessary for the shipper to go farther afield. So-called sherry we know even comes from Hamburgh; still we will confine ourselves to more legitimate sources. The pale, delicate, dry, tonical tasting wine known as Manzanilla is grown around the little town of San Lucar de Barrameda, the low-pitched roofs of which, dominated by half-a-dozen church-towers and the solid square keep of an old Moorish fortress, and girdled by orange-groves, spread themselves at the mouth of the Guadalquivir, some fifteen miles from Jerez. Here the *modus operandi* in vineyard and

bodega is similar to that we have already described, although the soleras are slightly differently managed. On the east the vineyards of Jerez join those of Puerto de Santa Maria, yielding somewhat inferior wines to those of their neighbours. In the town which owes its name to an image of the Virgin, found there when abandoned by the Moors, some of the principal sherry shippers have their bodegas. The Puerta ships annually about 20,000 butts of sherry, and lays claim to a position inferior only to Jerez. Beyond Puerto de Santa Maria, and on the shores of the Bay of Cadiz, is the ancient Moorish town of Rota, the vineyards of which yield, in addition to the well-known Sacramental Tent, a fair quantity of passable sherry. From Puerto Real half way towards Cadiz; from Chipiona, famous for its muscatel grapes; from Chiclana beyond Cadiz, renowned as the birthplace of the most illustrious bull-fighters; and from the lonely little town of Trebujena, northward of Jerez,

—many thousand butts of wine are annually sent by rail or bullock-cart into the sherry metropolis.

But the enterprising shipper looks yet farther afield for supplies. The tract of undulating country extending from Seville to Huelva is rich in miles of vineyards, the produce of many of which serves as an excellent basis for cheap sherries. Nor must Montilla—the ancestral appanage of the Medina-Coeli, and the birthplace of the Gran Capitan Gonzalo—perched on high amidst the Cordovan sierras, be forgotten.

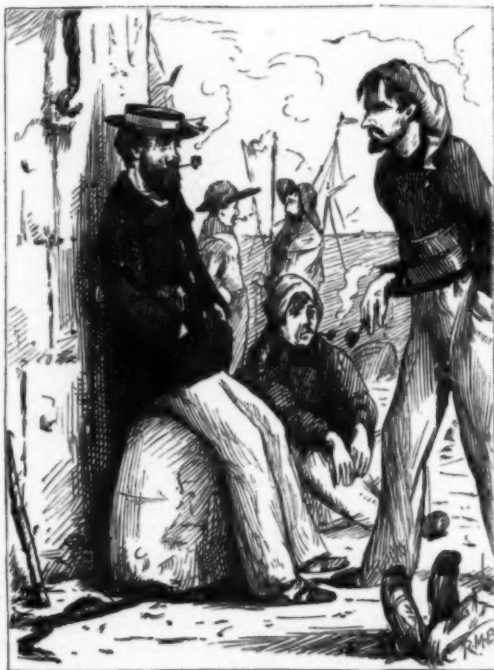
There is no need to revert to the discussion of a few years ago, with reference to the assumed unwholesomeness of sherry, when the reasoning of the opponents of the wine was as fallacious as their pretended facts. The absurdity of the outcry then raised has since been fully recognised; and lovers of the wine of Jerez, banishing vain alarms, may continue to follow rare Ben Jonson's sage recommendation to 'Be merry and drink sherry.'



SEASONING SHERRY CASKS AT SENOR MISA'S.

CLUB CAMEOS.

Bohemia.



It has been well said that the one-half of the world does not know how the other half lives. We each of us move in our own sphere, follow its habits, accept its teaching, and adopt its customs. Of the vast world outside our own petty circle—of its struggles for existence, of its professional wiles, of its feuds, jealousies, and observances—we know no more than the Chinaman, who writes down all beyond his dominions as barbarians. As in geology each strata has its separate

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and distinct formation, so in social life each class has its own peculiarities of manner, industry, and amusement, which reveal the order to which it belongs. What is permitted in the one class is not tolerated in the other; what is pleasure to the one would be regarded as the most irksome of restraints by the other. If there were no lines of demarcation separating the one class from the other, the very differences in the mode of life and in the ways of thought

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would prove in themselves obstacles sufficiently insurmountable to prevent fusion between such discordant elements.

Take the Bohemian as an example. To him the fetters of civilisation are insupportable; he declines to obey the commands of society and the code of morals it draws up. The homage to rank and wealth, the emptiness of general conversation, the monotony of routine, the attention paid to outward adornment, are all eminently distasteful to him. A man generally with some pretensions to art or literature, he infinitely prefers to chat with an artist over his pictures or with an author over his manuscripts than to add his name to the crowd of nobodies which throng the reception-rooms of a lady of fashion, or to take part in the feebleness and platitudes of ordinary social talk. Fond of the society of women, he detests the society of those whom the vulgar call 'ladies of position.' A woman—no matter how humble her birth—of genius; a clever woman; a woman who is well read without being a prig; a woman who is making a name for herself by her pen, her brush, her chisel, or by her musical attainments, is always sure of his homage and respectful admiration. In the society of such an one he thinks there is the best of all companionships, the companionship of thought; whilst on the other hand the society of ladies, of women who are simply the representatives of their order, and destitute of everything but modesty and good breeding, is in his opinion an unpleasant restraint. In the presence of the woman of Bohemia he can talk without reserve, he can consult his own comfort as to the posture he adopts, he can drink and smoke in her society without wounding her self-

respect, and his brain becomes quick and teeming from the rapid interchange of ideas and the play of wit and humour. The propriety and inanities of a lady, however, freeze him up and render him dull and sulky. The Bohemian is, as a rule, singularly free from the scruples of the moralist and the antipathies of the bigot; he will make love to all who let him, and when he has money he intends to pay his debts. He is kind and generous—if it be in his power—to those who are not likely to develop into rivals; but where he fears competition he is more jealous and spiteful than would be expected from his jovial presence and careless indifference. He frequents those haunts in the town where he is sure to meet men of his own calling and addicted to his own tastes; and, except under certain special circumstances, he resents the intrusion of the followers of 'society' within his midst. In all things he consults his own ease, and refuses to hamper his pleasures by any restrictions which Mrs. Grundy may think it prudent to suggest.

He has little sympathy with certain of his brother Bohemians, who are using the reputation which their productions have gained to become acquainted with the great and to hang on to the skirts of fashion. He ridicules their pretensions and despises their ambition. To him the conviviality of his own set, the freedom which permits each one to do as he pleases, the stories that are told, the liquor that is drunk, the fun and devilry which are interwoven with the texture of their lives, surpass all that the most servile toadyism can ever expect to obtain. Your true Bohemian is never more intolerant than when attacking those who are in a superior position to his own, and running amuck at all the pro-

prieties. When by chance he meets a great man he will refute his arguments and disparage the profession to which he belongs. On the occasions when he treads upon that common ground where all worlds assemble—at flower-shows, exhibitions, musical and dramatic entertainments, and the rest—he is easily to be recognised

by his garb and his studied contempt of all the *convenances* of life. Good-humoured enough in his own circle, a spirit of the most truculent antagonism pervades all his movements and conversation when he issues into a higher grade of life than his own. He thinks his own views upon all subjects to be correct, and is apt to become



warm when contradicted. It is impossible to mistake him for aught than he is, or to identify him with the class to which he does not belong. In his dress and bearing we as plainly recognise him to be a citizen of the realm of Bohemia as we can tell the Frenchman who hails from Paris or the German whose home is in Berlin.

One such Bohemian is a member of the Caravanseraï. Con-

verts are always the most fervent in the support of their new creed, and no subjects are more patriotic than those who have been naturalised. Roy Somersset Fitzgerald Capel de Beaufoy (commonly called Alphabet de Beaufoy from his ample supply of Christian names) belongs to the Bohemian world, not by birth or profession, but by inclination and preference. The son of a distinguished Irish

peer, who at one time gracefully filled the office of Viceroy of his native land, Alphabet de Beaufoy has little in common with the stock from which he has sprung. He is deficient in all the characteristics of the typical aristocrat. Little Farningham West, with his blonde locks, his large blue eyes, his aquiline nose, his short upper-lip, and the smallness of his ears, hands, and feet, possesses in an eminent degree all those 'points' which race alone, it is said, can confer. Yet we know that he is but humbly born, and for the sake of Mrs. West, who is the severest of Sabbatarians, let us hope that the principles of ethnology occasionally vary in their course of development.

No one looking at Alphabet would imagine him to belong to an exclusive order, and to be allied directly or indirectly to some of the proudest houses in the country. He is untidy in his dress, and careless as to the make and shape of his garments; as long as they keep him warm in winter and cool in summer he is utterly indifferent as to their cut or texture. He has been reproved more than once by his sisters for putting in an attendance at a fashionable marriage with an alpaca coat on his back and a straw hat on his head, simply because the event happened to take place on a warm day in June. He abominates evening attire most heartily, and considers that as long as a man's linen is clean he is in proper costume to go anywhere. On the few occasions when he drives his stanhope in the Park, or rides his mare in the Row—for he prefers, not unwisely, the attractions of the suburbs—he dons a costume more suitable for the country than for London. Only once have I seen him in a tall hat, and then he told me that he had been to church with his

mother; but even this deference to the demands of civilisation was somewhat marred by the tweed suit he had thought it convenient to wear on the occasion.

There are some men who can dispense with all the advantages of art, but De Beaufoy is hardly to be included in the category. He is not ugly (no one with those honest brown eyes of his could be positively ill-looking, and some ladies have even been known to admit that he is 'almost handsome;') but then my friend has a very good fortune left him by his grandmother); but a man with a big nose, a large laughing mouth, a complexion very much freckled, hair thin and sandy, and a figure which good living and whisky-and-water have combined most effectually to destroy, should not be offended if his friends class him amongst the ill-favoured. Yet plain in appearance and disorderly in dress, it is impossible not to take the man for a gentleman after *speaking* to him. On certain occasions, when his self-respect has been wounded, his manner is very haughty and dignified; the great monarch himself could not be more crushing in his lofty disdain than De Beaufoy when he has to suppress a cad.

When Alphabet first joined the Caravanseraï, it was considered 'shocking bad form' for him always to appear in the club in a wideawake, and to dine in a shooting-coat—it was treating the club like 'a pot-house,' some said; nor do I think such remarks were uncalled for by the supreme indifference of my friend to the conventionalities of life. Little West was one of the warmest of this band of critics; when, however, he discovered that the object of his severe strictures was the son of a mighty peer, he discontinued his observations, and did his best to become acquainted with

the Bohemian. How elastic is human nature, and how much we forgive to our superiors! If Jones was to walk in the Park in a pot-hat, to enter the stalls of a theatre in a tweed suit, or to be seen outside an omnibus, he would lay himself open to being cut by his acquaintances. But if a noble Marquis dines at his club

in thick boots and velvetens, or walks up St. James's-street eating walnuts, or is seen carrying home a large parcel from the Co-operative Stores, his conduct calls forth no remark. The one is 'a cad' for acting as he does; the other is praised for being above the 'timidity of the snob.' Who after this can say that there is



not one law for the great and another for the humble?

Where civilisation has attained to its highest pitch of luxury and ostentation, as at the present day with us, there will always be men to whom its splendours and restraints will be distasteful. And as a rule those who can enjoy to the fullest extent all that a wealthy and refined civilisation has to offer will often be the very men to turn

their backs upon its charms, and go elsewhere. These know what they are rejecting; they have entered the race, found the training irksome, and have seen that the prizes are not worth the winning. On the other hand, the men who have had little opportunity for the indulgence of social pleasures—either from the intensity of their industry or from obstacles that bar their progress in society—are always

most keen in their pursuit of what wealth and rank can lay before them. The one have eaten the apple, and discovered that it is but Dead Sea fruit; the other see the pippin hanging on the tree—red, luscious, and tempting—and with outstretched hand and watering mouth long for the moment when they can grasp it and taste its imagined sweetness.

De Beaufoy has little to learn from the great world which he does not already know. Familiar from the days of his boyhood with all the seductions that society can offer, they cease now to have any attraction for him. It is with difficulty that he can ever be persuaded to be bored by going out to dance and dinner. His Bohemian tastes interfere sadly with his family ties, for it is only under the greatest pressure that he can be made to visit his relations, or to add himself to the number of the home circle. Yet if his mother and sisters only knew how easily he accepts an invitation from an actress to breakfast, or from an actor to supper, or from a detective to go the rounds of the cribs of London, they would scarcely feel flattered.

He is Bohemian to the backbone, and only cares for Bohemia. Every single haunt in the country of his adoption he is familiar with. When he is in society he is huffy, and stands on his dignity; outside its pale he will be on good terms with all the varied crew that cross his path. However strict may be the rules of a theatre, De Beaufoy has only to send his card round to the stage-door to be welcomed by the manager, to lounge about the greenroom, and to enter into little prandial arrangements with certain of the fair *artistes*. He belongs to a host of small clubs, which hold their meetings at a late hour of the night in cozy taverns, where the

rooms are carpeted with sawdust; where the chairs are of the familiar Windsor pattern now relegated to kitchens; where the tables are coverless, and of the darkest mahogany, and stained by the rings of pewter-pots and the blemishes caused by heated tumblers; where prints of famous trotters, of ex-champions of the belt and of the river, of jockeys, statesmen, and deformities, hang against the walls; where the cuisine is strictly limited to kidneys, chops, and steaks, served with the whitest and most flowery of potatoes; where the wines should be shunned, but where the beer and the spirits may be depended upon; and where the unfamed in letters and in art love to assemble. On the few occasions when it has been my good fortune to meet the magnates of authorship, I have invariably been disappointed with their powers of conversation. Their wit seems forced, their stories are old, and their talk is halting and hesitating, as if they knew that they were impostors, and on the point of being found out. In many an anteroom I have listened to far more wit and humour from men who could not write a page without committing themselves to errors in grammar and orthography.

Yet I must admit that when Alphabet has taken me into one of these obscure haunts as his guest, it has seldom been my lot to come away from the kindly dens disappointed. O those evenings, or rather nights, or rather mornings! How bright was the wit, how exquisitely droll, though somewhat naughty, the stories! how good were the songs! how jokes and keen, but not malicious, chaff went the round! and how queer and uncouth were many of the members, and what a terrible dryness of throat seemed to afflict every one of the community! There they were—actors

scarcely a remove from supers ; journalists who were really little better than penny-a-liners ; artists sketching for magazines, or painting for the dealers at famine prices ; stage-managers of theatres one never heard of ; authors who had to put their big thoughts away, and slave for the publishers as hacks ; a few barristers who had never held a brief, but who, from their remarks, seemed worthy to occupy the seat on the bench vacated by an eminent Lord Chief Baron who at one time held his court in the Strand ; one or two men whom drink had ' broke,' and who were picking up a livelihood as best they could ; and a sprinkling of what some of the club called ' swells from the West-end.' What a motley lot ! full of fun and devilry and brandy-and-water ! They appeared to regard life as one gigantic joke, and to look upon him who was the funniest comedian as the best man amongst them. Never had I been made to laugh so much. The very appearance of some of the men, the expressions they used when discussing any question that came up, their wholesale irreverence for the leaders of their different professions, were all intensely amusing. Added to this, there was much real brilliancy in the conversation during the earlier part of the evening, till the talk unhappily became blended with spirits-and-water ; whilst there were two men whose voices would have commanded high prices on the stage or in concert-rooms, could their sobriety only have been guaranteed. In such company even the great Dr. Johnson himself would have refrained from moralising. It is the next morning, when the tongue is parched and the brow is fevered, that we moralise. ' Those fellows do make me laugh,' said De Beaufoy, as we returned westwards ; ' if

we only had one or two of them at Pratt's !'

Reading a novel some nights ago, I was much amused at certain ideas of the talented authoress touching Bohemia. The fair and gifted creature was evidently under the impression that there is a certain quarter in our capital which is as much the haunt of the Bohemian as Pall Mall is of the club-man. In this curious *faubourg*, we are told, the inhabitants consist entirely of artists, authors, journalists, actors, sculptors, and entertainers of the public. It has its own special clubs and taverns and places of amusement. None but the Bohemian is admitted within this privileged quarter ; and it is subject to its own laws, which it has power to enforce by fine or punishment upon the refractory. I need hardly say that, except in the fertile imagination of the novelist, no such *imperium in imperio* exists.

As Satan in *Paradise Lost* is made to say that wherever he goes he makes a hell, so the Bohemian, wherever he pitches his tent, makes a Bohemia. Let De Beaufoy wander where he list, he is sure to surround himself with Bohemians. Though he flies the ensign of 'the Squadron,' he shuns all the fascinations of Cowes ; but is generally to be found off the coast of Scotland or Ireland, where he is the patron of whalers, herring fishermen, coastguard-men, pilots, and the officials connected with the lighthouses and lifeboats. When becalmed or fond of a certain spot, he is a godsend to every one in the harbour, and to the seafaring community around. He gets up sailing-matches amongst the owners of the herring-smacks, rowing-matches and swimming-matches, and is most liberal in the distribution of prizes in the shape of tankards, kegs of whisky, ready

money, and tablets of honeydew tobacco. Should a storm arise, and the lifeboat of the place distinguish itself, he invites the crew to a supper at a tavern, and shines as the most noisy and jovial of hosts. He avoids the countryhouses of the neighbourhood like the plague; but he can talk by the hour to an old salt, and is the best and thirstiest listener imaginable to a yarn. Alphabet is no fool or 'chalk yachtsman.' He has studied harder in Thames-street than most men do at the University, and has obtained his certificate from the Board of Trade. The sailors know that, though he is a 'swell,' he is as smart an amateur seaman as there is afloat; and captains of barques have more than once been indebted to him for downright professional assistance.

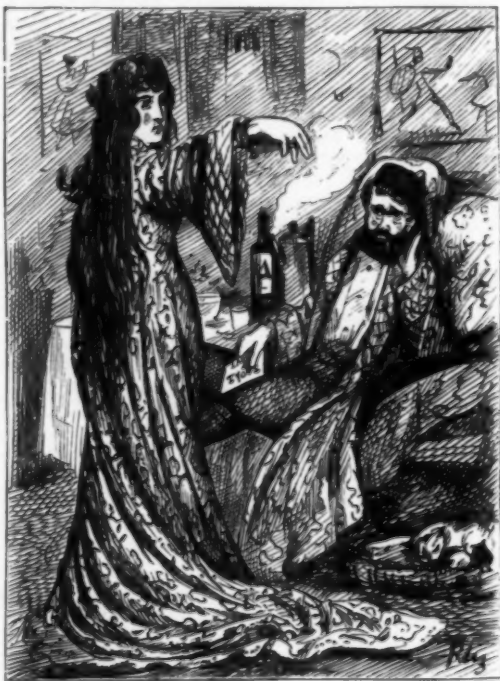
Like many men passionately fond of the sea, Alphabet is but a lukewarm lover of the pleasures of the chase. He has a little hunting-box about fifty miles from London; and if a bad rider to hounds, he is at least a bold one, for he cranes at nothing, though he has come terribly to grief on more than one occasion. When a frost sets in, I fancy he is not keenly disappointed; for at such times he drives over to the stables of a neighbouring trainer of great repute, and is far happier chatting with that gentleman over some old dry sherry, hearing anecdotes about the days of the turf past and present, inspecting the horses, and talking to the jockeys, than when pursuing the wily fox. He is a good shot, but in his eyes there is no sport more attractive than at the dead of night to join with the keepers in a free-fight with the poachers. Those guardians of the game for miles around always let 'the honourable' know when they expect battle, and seldom does he fail to put in an

appearance. Some men have a weakness for driving locomotives, others for attending conflagrations and working the fire-engine, and others for slaving at a printing-press. The weakness of De Beaufoy is a moonlight night, the rides of a wood, and a hand-to-hand encounter between a dozen men and a dozen poachers. It is fortunate for the poachers that the law limits Alphabet's powers of punishment as a magistrate, else those sneaking purloiners would never receive a more lenient sentence than five years' penal servitude.

Whenever an opportunity presents itself De Beaufoy runs up to London. Like your true Bohemian, he is always happy in a crowd, with the bustle of life going on around him, the fun of the fair presenting itself at every step, agitation, noise, confusion, amusement at every turn. The theatre is his favourite pastime, and he must be on the high seas, or else there must be very good reason for his absence when he fails to attend the performances of a first night. He is extremely fond of discovering obscure talent, and more than one young actor owes his elevation to the London boards to the interest and discrimination of my friend, who has been struck by his playing in the provinces. Sunday is the favourite day for De Beaufoy to give his dinners at the Caravan-serai, because that day is generally the only one at the disposal of the actors, who are sure to be amongst his guests. There is scarcely a theatre in town where his presence is not welcome in the greenroom, and there is not a play brought out but that he forms part of the audience which listens to its first reading. Intimately acquainted with modern dramatic literature, De Beaufoy would make an excellent news-

paper critic were he forced to write for his living. More than once, at some of his tavern haunts, have I heard him, after the first night of a new piece, correcting the surmises of dramatic critics as to the source of the new play, showing what was original in it and what was plagiarised, and giving chapter and verse for his authority.

Actresses like him, not simply because he is very generous and peculiarly susceptible to the charms of a pretty face and of a well-moulded figure, but because, having travelled much, and having been acquainted with most of the leading actors in Europe, he has been really of service to them in the creation of their characters. I



know one young actress who made a great hit in a part, and yet her idea of the character was due, not to the originality of her genius, but solely to the teaching of De Beaufoy, who had seen when at Dresden an obscure German actress in a rôle of a similar kind.

Anything new, or any one who is making a sensation, is sure of finding in De Beaufoy a patron

and friend. Is a comic singer the rage, is a gymnast particularly clever on the trapeze, has a pedestrian made himself famous by his walking powers, has a new comic author appeared, Alphabet will make his acquaintance, and if the man is presentable ask him to supper at a certain excellent hostel not a hundred miles from Covent Garden. Is there a man or woman noted for gigantic stature,

enormous bulk, or some extraordinary malformation, De Beaufoy is sure to be among those present at the earliest medical investigation. His curiosity is boundless. He visits prisons, lunatic asylums, convict establishments, and, thanks to the protection of friendly detectives, he knows every thieves' kitchen in London as well as if he had lived all his years in the atmosphere of Scotland Yard. The low life of the town, the society of those in an inferior grade to his own, intercourse with

that great body of the community whose object it is to amuse the public by their peculiar gifts, have attractions for him which are irresistible. His fortune, his name, his social surroundings, have placed him in the order of the patricians; but in tastes, habits, and sympathies nature has marked him out as a proletarian. As the age of miracles is past it cannot be expected that he will ever be transformed into other than he is. He will live and die a Bohemian.

TRUFFLES.

PHYSICISTS want to know all about everything, for the sole and disinterested sake of knowing. It matters not to them what the object may be, whether a plant of strange propensities, an infant crab, a suggestive embryo, or a strange condition of matter; it is equally welcome, provided that it either teaches something itself, or points to the road along which good teaching may be met with. The result of the inquiry may promise no practical advantage. The investigation is no less eagerly pursued, for the knowledge acquired is a sufficient reward.

All physical research, however, is not barren. Instead of turning out to be merely intellectual wealth, many objects sought for, could they only be found, would lead to almost boundless fortune. Not to mention the elixir of life and the philosopher's stone, which the bulk of philosophers have given up, there would be little difficulty in becoming a millionaire by the discovery of an antidote to canine madness, or even of the true explanation and prevention of sea-sickness.

In like manner, if we ask, 'What is a truffle?' it is not merely to clear up a curious point of natural history, which most people believe to be already settled, but to ascertain the means of increasing the supply of an article which fetches, when obtained, handsome sums of money. Truffles are by no means vulgar; their strange nature and their rarity save them from that. For two good reasons, they are unsought and uncared

for by the British million. The first reason, that they are always costly, absolves me from discussing the second. For although the price of truffles varies from year to year, they are never cheap enough to be freely indulged in by large families with limited incomes. A truffled turkey may run up to 3*l.*, or 4*l.*, or more; a truffled pheasant to one-third or one-half of that sum; a truffled partridge to proportionally less, according to the quantity and quality of the precious tuber inserted.

The truffling is done by stuffing the bird with scraped or peeled truffles, whole or divided, as size may happen to be, mixed with seasoned sausage-meat or finely-chopped ham or bacon. The longer the interval that can be allowed to elapse between the truffling and the roasting, the more thoroughly the aroma will pervade the flesh and the more complete the epicure's approval.

Without indulging in so heavy an outlay, a turkey may be truffled economically, thus: For a small bird, take a quarter or a third of a pound, for a large one, half a pound, of truffles. Large tubers are to be preferred, with the fewest irregularities on their surface. Smell them, to be sure they are not mouldy. Wash them carefully, scrubbing off with a soft brush every particle of earth or grit that sticks to them; let them drain and dry. Do not peel them; but slice them across as thin as possible.

Skin and boil a good quantity

of the best chestnuts; let them cool. Mix your aliced truffles with these, and with them fill the *body* of your turkey two or three days before it is to be cooked. On the day of cooking, fill the *crop* of the bird with ordinary stuffing containing a few bits of truffle intermixed; then roast it. Serve accompanied by its own gravy in a hot sauce-boat. This mode, which is elegant and yet unpretending, gives quite as liberal a sight and taste of truffles as will be cared for by people who are not professedly fond of them, and more than enough to satisfy many, for the love of truffles is an acquired taste. Novices make light of them, talk about turnips and tar, or even refuse to eat them because they are black. Mr. Worthington G. Smith, in his excellent manual, *Mushrooms and Toadstools* (which, with its sheets of coloured figures, ought to have a place in every country house and village library), confesses that, at first, he regarded the truffle with the greatest loathing; but that he now esteems it according to its true value, acknowledging that it makes a capital ingredient for gravies, stuffings, and meat-pies. In consequence of the ever-varying price of French truffles, no estimate can be given of the probable cost of economically truffled turkey.

Perhaps the best-known guise in which truffles present themselves here is in that excellent association with the livers of geese familiar to the civilised world as *pâté de foie gras*; which also, although certainly much better than, is almost as dear as the insensate dishes of peacocks' brains and nightingales' tongues. Still, even in those high-priced *pâtés*, truffles enter in quite modest proportion. They just serve, by black spots and

alices, to vein and relieve the dull-gray breccia-like mass of the livers. Yet more homœopathic is the dose of truffles vouchsafed to sundry *terrines*, each of which has its local reputation, composed of larks, thrushes, snipes, wild ducks, woodcocks, or whatever game the place is noted for. In France, the most popular preparation, which allows you to see little bits of truffle, and to fancy that you taste them, is *pieds de porc truffés*, truffled pigs' feet; these, obtained from the north of France, will easily travel to London while the weather is cool. Their price, moreover, is moderate. All the cooking they require is to be set into a brisk, not a burning, oven for twenty minutes before serving.

French cooks of the old school thought there could never be too many truffles at a set state dinner. On wealthy tables they were made to appear, in some shape or another, in each successive course, making what we should now call the most incongruous alliances, such as with salad, fish, and Frenchified forms of plum-pudding! Now they are rarely served alone, as we serve mushrooms, though Mr. Smith mentions native truffles as a great delicacy boiled, or simply roasted in hot ashes. These are the specimens which, in Covent-garden Market, will realise at times, he says, as much as five shillings per pound. Never having tasted British tubers, I can only guess that, for reasons to be stated, they are inferior to, perhaps different in flavour from, the French samples which often command three or four times five shillings per pound.

The object, however, of the present paper is not the spread of gastronomical knowledge, but the announcement of a heresy. What is a truffle? That is the question.

'The diamond of the kitchen,' says Brillat-Savarin; which does not help us much. Everybody thinks he knows, on authority, that the truffle is an underground cryptogamic plant. The late Dr. Badham (in *Esculent Funguses*) briefly says: 'This plant, the common truffle of our markets, is abundant in Wiltshire and some other parts of England, and probably occurs in many places where it escapes observation from its subterranean habits.' A distinguished living fungologist, Worthington G. Smith, tells us: 'The truffle is a subterranean fungus, invariably found under trees. . . . Besides the truffle sold in Covent-garden Market, there are, according to Berkeley, nearly forty other species found in this country, of various forms and qualities.'

This ought to be conclusive. Nevertheless, practical truffle-farmers and truffle-hunters are far from satisfied with that explanation. Present circumstances not permitting me to visit truffle-grounds in actual produce, I express no opinion in the matter, but content myself with briefly mentioning facts tending to prove that the truffle is still a mystery.

In last year's Paris Exhibition, there was a building devoted to the details of French forestry, many of which details were explained by official treatises (*Administration des Forêts*) emanating from the Ministère de l'Agriculture et du Commerce, and printed at the Imprimerie Nationale. One of these publications, intended for the instruction of those whom it might concern, was *Etudes sur la Truffe*, par A. George-Grimblot, Inspecteur des Forêts, who was appointed to oversee the forests of Avignon in January 1873; and he has the courage to give his own solution of the problem, 'What is

a truffle?' although opposed to the received conclusions of science.

The first thing which struck him was the importance of truffles in money value. The truffle-hunting alone, in productive forests, lets for several hundreds, or even thousands, of francs; while, to show the diversity of the yield, the rent of others is under a hundred francs a year.

The scene of M. Grimblot's investigations, the Department of Vaucluse, is traversed by chains of mountains. Now he found that the truffle, to be produced in good condition, needs a certain intensity and duration of solar influence, which, amidst hills, are only realised on southern aspects. Moreover, above a certain altitude, good and plentiful truffles are not to be looked for. If this is the case in the climate of Provence, what is to be expected in more northern latitudes and less sunny regions like the British Isles?

The truffle is essentially a native of chalky soils; the subsoil must be permeable, at the same time that too dry a soil is unfavourable. The presence of trees is indispensable. Truffles are found in the open glades which traverse the slopes and level parts of forests. They are produced at the foot of many different *essences*, as the French call the various species of trees and shrubs, but especially at the foot of oaks; so much so that, for practical study, we may confine ourselves to the grand divisions of deciduous and evergreen oaks, the latter thriving on the plain and on warm hillsides, the former (whether with sessile or pedunculated acorns) on the mountain and exposed situations.

The question has been raised whether certain races of oaks are hereditarily more favourable to truffles than others; i.e. whether

acorns from good truffle-yielding oaks will produce trees of like meritorious quality. Those who hold the affirmative have been able to sell their acorns dear; but the belief has not been confirmed by experiment.

Two crops, therefore, wood and truffles, are thus obtained from the same area of forest-ground. Occasionally the truffles fetch more than half as much as the wood. Certain forests near Carpentras yield more than 1000*l.*'s worth of truffles annually.

A curious phenomenon to be observed in the forests of Vaucluse is the gradual disappearance of non-arborescent vegetation on spots which are promising and preparing to yield truffles (a process which sometimes lasts several years), and its complete absence from truffle-grounds in actual production. Not only do mosses and grasses disappear, but thyme, lavender, and other low-growing shallow-rooted ligneous vegetables. As soon as the truffle-ground ceases to yield, herbaceous vegetation rapidly reappears on its surface. M. Grimblot refers the cause to chemical action.

Two theories are current respecting the origin and nature of the truffle. First, and most generally accepted, that it is a fungus; secondly, that it is a gall, proceeding from the same cause as the galls found on the leaves and branches of trees and shrubs—namely, in this case, the puncture of an insect on the roots of the oaks beneath whose shade the truffles are found.

Now several remarkable facts are undeniable. Without trees there are no truffles; exactly as far as the roots extend, they may be successfully searched for, but no farther; beyond the radius of the circle occupied by the roots, there are none; as the radicles

of a tree extend, or are diverted by disturbance into another direction, the truffles follow. The most inexperienced truffle-dog will tell you that it is as utterly useless to scratch and scrape for truffles in the open, treeless, shrubless plain as to dig for potatoes in the Mer de Glace.

Again, no one has yet succeeded in propagating truffles horticulturally as we do mushrooms. They cannot be made to increase and multiply by cuttings, spores, spawn, or any other known mode of increase. Nobody has caused a single truffle-spore to germinate; nobody has discovered uncontestedly its mycelium or prolific threads. Often, on the contrary, truffles not bigger than peas have been turned up, perfectly free and devoid of filaments. Often has M. Grimblot followed the truffle-hunters; but never has the soil disturbed by their pigs presented the least trace of mycelium, either around the tubercles or in the contiguous earth. Pigs, be it noted—the original guild of truffle-finders; dogs are only modern interlopers—are preferred, in that department, to discover the presence of the delicacy sought for. M. Grimblot mentions, in flattering terms, 'an excellent sow' which aided his researches.

An old mushroom-bed, employed when exhausted to manure a garden, will cause mushrooms to spring up, sometimes for months afterwards, on the spots in the open ground where it has been applied; but no such result is to be obtained by transferring earth from truffle-grounds to other localities.

The decayed remains of any vegetable are supposed to be the best manure for the growth of that vegetable, because they restore to the soil the elements of which it has been deprived.

Hence the expectation was entertained that crops of truffles might be increased by manuring with rejected portions of truffles. Now the pâté- and terrine-makers of Carpentras have a considerable quantity of truffle-peeling to dispose of, and M. Rousseau, a neighbouring landowner, tried the experiment several times over. But instead of favouring the production, this application brought it to a sudden standstill.

Truffle-beds do not shift their place or spread like the fairy rings formed by certain fungi. They are stationary, so to speak, never extending beyond the area occupied by the roots of the productive or protective tree. Lastly, the mycelium of fungi having the property of almost completely absorbing the alkalis and the phosphoric acid contained in the soil where it is developed, which elements chemical analysis proves to be indispensable to the truffle, it follows that truffle-grounds ought to be exhausted in the course of a few years, unless they obtain the needful materials from some other sources of supply; whereas there exist in Vaucluse, at Bedoin, Pernes, St. Saturnin, &c., truffle-beds, unfailingly productive, occupying the same spot, whose tutelary oaks are from sixty to eighty years old, or even older. This, however, is not the rule, which may be taken at from twenty to thirty years. But where will you find a mushroom-bed which continues productive without renewal for twenty years? All these circumstances are at variance with the cryptogamic theory of truffle-growth.

True, in Vaucluse the foresters make what are called *truffières artificielles*; that is, the ground is put into conditions which permit truffles to grow there, if, and when, they will. How, is far from

being ascertained. With this object an oak wood is made—either by sowing acorns or planting young trees in November and December—evergreen species on sunny slopes, deciduous in exposed situations. The young plants are kept clean from weeds, and hoed in summer to encourage their growth. In ten years the yield of truffles will begin. In five years more the trees must be thinned out to wider distances, the thinning to be renewed when judged advisable. From ten to fourteen feet from tree to tree is found a sufficient interval.

Whence come the truffles thus coaxed into existence, and what is their real parentage? M. Grimbolot will not admit that they are galls resulting from the puncture of an insect, as suggested by those who perceive the difficulties of the fungus theory. At certain times, swarms of flies may be seen hovering over the surface of the truffle-grounds; and it was concluded that those insects were the cause of the radical galls or truffles. But if this were the case, the truffle ought to be found adhering to the parent root, exactly as galls hang attached to the leaves and branches on which they grow. Now, out of a whole year's crop, hardly a single tuber will be met with, even in accidental contact with an oak-root. Moreover, the larva of the gall-forming insect ought to be found within the fresh-dug truffle, issuing from it afterwards in the perfect state, which is never the case; although truffles left to rot in the ground will contain not one, but several larvae, like decaying fruits, mushrooms, or putrid flesh.

The truffle, if neither gall nor mushroom, must nevertheless be something. *Ex nihilo, nihil fit.*

If you lop a tree into pollard

shape, you disturb the ordinary production and elaboration of sap; if you cut the tree down to a stool or stock, you suppress it altogether. Now an oak copse, after lopping, ceases to yield truffles, and takes five or six years to become again productive. The production is invariably found to correspond with the development of the branches and foliage. When a young oak begins to yield, the truffles are found almost at the very foot. At that period, its radicular system consists of a taproot descending more or less vertically, with short lateral fibres. By and by, the lateral main roots are developed and spread from the tap-root, as from a centre. The truffles follow the progress of the roots. When the truffle-bed is approaching its end, and no more young fibres are put forth, except at the very extremity of the oak-roots, it is only quite at the circumference of the circle that the last truffles are to be obtained.

From these and other considerations, M. Grimblot draws the conclusion that truffles are produced by radicular excretion of elaborated sap from the roots of the oak-trees. Unless this is the case, it is impossible to understand

the intimate connection which exists between the vegetative vigour of the trees, and the abundance with which truffles appear beneath them. Whatever favours the elaboration of sap—sunshine, luxuriant foliage, moderate moisture—also favours the crop of truffles. On an open naked plain, there is not a truffle. Sow the plain with acorns, or plant it with oaks, and, after a certain lapse of time, when the trees are in full growth, you may dig out truffles from the earth at their feet. Surely those oak-trees are the cause of their presence; for before they were planted, not a truffle was to be found.

M. Grimblot's reasoning, to do it full justice, ought to be stated at greater length and completeness; but enough has been said to indicate the purport of the novel theory. *Savans* and naturalists will consult his original treatise, perhaps, before utterly condemning, certainly before accepting, his ideas. For the majority of our readers, if the question appears too dry or unimportant, they can find some slight consolation and refreshment in a crust crowned with a slice of truffle-mottled pâté, helped down by a glass of good old Médoc.



LIFE IN THE ROYAL MILITARY ACADEMY.

BY A GENTLEMAN-CADET.

It was in the autumn of the year 18— that I first made acquaintance with the Royal Military Academy. A previous glimpse of it I had certainly had, just before the competitive examination in Burlington Gardens, at which I had been lucky enough to be successful; for the medical inspection was at that time held in the School of Arms, with which I was destined in after years to become so well acquainted; but on that occasion my attention was too much taken up with the

ingenious artifices by which the doctors evaded any possibility of a candidate, defective in eyesight or in hearing, escaping detection, to form much idea of the Academy itself. Some vague recollection I had of figures in blue tunics with red facings and gold forage-caps, and of a sound of trumpets; but beyond that the place which I was about to enter was to me a veritable *terra incognita*. However, I was light-hearted enough at the prospect before me; and the congratulations of my friends had, I

fear, produced in me a considerable amount of conceit, which caused me already to imagine myself somebody.

I got out at the Arsenal Station together with a number of other youths, whose faces I recognised as having been amongst those which I had been wont to study in the intervals of abstraction, when ideas would not come, at the never-to-be-forgotten room in Burlington Gardens. The porters at the little dingy station seemed at once to recognise us as their lawful prey, and our luggage and belongings were seized upon when scarcely out of the van. However, to do them justice, if somewhat rapacious, they were civil enough, and we were speedily *en route* for the Academy.

Twenty minutes' drive brought us to the gates; and here, seeing the size of the building, a doubt began to occur to us as to where we ought to direct the cabby to drive to. However, the latter functionary had acted as Jehu to too many embryo cadets not to know the ways of the establishment; and accordingly brought us up to the place where a sergeant, resplendent in all the glory of his new gold lace, was standing. This latter escorted us to a room where the adjutant was waiting, and where we deposited our 'contribution' for the half year (the sum of 62*l.* 10*s.* in my case), and signed a declaration that we would abide by the laws and regulations of the Academy. Then we received each a piece of paper with the number of his room and the letter of his house written on it, and were straightway dismissed to find our way thither as best we might.

My first view of my apartment did not by any means prepossess me in its favour. There was no one in it at the time, as, I found afterwards, its other three occu-

pants were absent at study, so that I had ample time to form my opinion upon the place. Imagine, then, a square room with bare whitewashed walls, the stones of which protruded here and there in all their pristine roughness. There was a large window; but far from giving a cheery appearance to the room, it had the contrary effect, from being covered on the inside with a diamond-pattern grating of strong iron bars, painted a dull ochre, and at present embellished by two or three sponges sticking in the openings. Underneath this window ran a ledge, on which were placed four basins of galvanised iron, and beneath which were four corresponding zinc cans, or 'toashers,' as I found they were called in the slang of the Academy. Add to these a wooden table and four Windsor chairs, together with four beds of the ordinary soldier's pattern, made to fold up during the daytime on a hinge in the centre, and you have the furniture complete. A coal-box of course there was, and also a set of fire-irons; but beyond that—nothing.

I went outside to make a survey of the external arrangements. At the back of each house was a stone-flagged open courtyard, on the farther side of which was a low range of buildings, containing a number of separate compartments, each containing a tub numbered to correspond with a room.

By this time there was a noise of footsteps; the great clock in the library struck, and the cadets came pouring in from the several classrooms. But as this paper is intended to be a mere sketch of the general style of life at the Academy, I shall not weary my readers with accounts of individual characters; they can meet so many themselves in their own

lives—more by far than they will ever be able to understand.

Now, therefore, for a little of the inner life of the 'shop.' The latter word is the name by which the institution is universally known amongst the cadets, and even amongst the officers of the scientific corps, though its origin is obscure. Like doubtful hieroglyphics, there are many interpretations, any one of which may be the right one, and which are all equally plausible. In fact, the Academy, like most other old-established institutions, has a language of its own and customs of its own, handed down from generation to generation, and preserved, even in the present Radical century, by the innate Conservatism of the army. A few of these customs we hope to lay before our readers, and trust that they will have some interest for them.

The first and great principle of the Academy is, that the last-joined, or 'snookers,' as they are familiarly termed, are to be sat upon as much as possible, lest they should become too conceited with themselves. This task is confided almost exclusively to the cadets of the second term, who, having just themselves escaped from the thralldom of the lowest class, are naturally ready to do unto others as they have been done to. With this end, a number of minor and purely arbitrary regulations have been handed down, from time immemorial, as to the things which 'snookers' may not do. They may not wear the strap of their forage-caps otherwise than under the chin; may not presume to walk upon the sacred floor of the School of Arms when the band is performing; may not wear capes within the precincts of the Academy. Any infringement of these regulations is considered as 'cheek,' and dealt

with by the summary process of 'turning up,' which last certainly deserves a paragraph to itself.

I have already mentioned that all the iron beds of the cadets are made to fold up on a pair of hinges in the centre during the daytime. When, therefore, a last-joined has been seen to commit some act of 'cheek,' it is incumbent upon the senior cadet of his room to send out to some other of his own class word that 'So-and-so is to be turned up.' In pursuance of the order, inevitable as fate, the culprit is awakened from sleep by finding his heels suddenly describing an arc, and arriving finally at a point as nearly as possible directly over his head. His first impulse is to make a violent effort to bring the end of his couch down again; but an ominous weight on the top causes him to reflect that his regulation portmanteau is there, and will be an unpleasant object to receive upon his head. Either, therefore, he must wriggle out in a most undignified manner at the side of the bed, or else wait, in an equally undignified position, until it pleases his judges to let him down again. In either case the shock to his feelings is severe, and most effective in making him recognise his true place in the social scale of the Academy.

Another use which these beds may be put to is almost equally ingenious. The punishments at the 'shop' for minor offences, such as want of smartness on parade, &c., consist of extra marching-drills, known irreverently as 'hock-stira.' The cadet who is unlucky enough to come in for one of these is obliged to turn out at 6 A.M., which in winter, when the mornings are dark and frosty, has a very sufficiently deterrent effect. Of course, to wake at that hour would be beyond the capabilities of any

ordinary individual, so the resource adopted is to put a regulation Wellington boot under one of the legs of the bed in the evening. Next morning, when the servant comes in for the dirty boots, he recognises the signal, and awakens the unhappy youth from his peaceful slumber.

As of course there is only one tub for each room, it is the privilege of the head of the room to go last to perform his ablutions, and thus to have some minutes' more sleep. The 'anooker' is held responsible for getting up in time to let the others dress before turn out. The Academy authorities go on the sensible principle, that a man who cannot stand a little hardship has not a constitution suiting him for military life; and it certainly requires a good stamina to be able to run across a courtyard covered with snow, break the ice on a tub, bathe in it, and then run back the same way. Yet since I entered the Academy, I never heard of a single case of any disease of the chest brought on by such causes.

As to amusements, the 'shop' is full of them. There is a splendid library, which, though almost burned down in 1873, has since been restocked with an array of books which would make many a man envious of a month's access to them. There are billiard-rooms, racket-courts, skittle-alleys, gymnastics, lawn-tennis, and, in fact, almost every athletic amusement which could be wished for, and on which the officer who has got his commission often looks back with regret from his room in the casemate of some solitary fort on the edge of the sea. Leave can always be obtained from 2 p.m. on Saturday till the last train on Sunday night; but the proximity of London has made it necessary for the authorities to impose cer-

tain restrictions upon this privilege. At the commencement of each term a cadet must bring with him a list of those friends whom his parents wish him to visit, and it is only on the production of a letter of invitation from one of these that he can obtain leave.

About three evenings in the week the Artillery band performs in the School of Arms, and the cadets generally take the opportunity of practising dancing with one another, the result of which is that the officers of the scientific corps are well known in the garrison towns for their proficiency in the art. Fencing, gymnastics, riding, and swimming form part of the regular course of studies; so that the body is not nearly so much neglected in comparison with the mind, as seems to be the prevalent impression. Indeed, despite all that has been said to its disadvantage, the present competitive system has most undoubtedly the effect in practice of bringing the best men to the front, and I may add the best officers also.

Not the least popular, and certainly in some respects the most useful, of the amusements provided for the gentlemen-cadets is a fine workshop fitted for work both in wood and in metal, containing steam-turning lathes with all the latest improvements. Here the gift of handiness which some favoured ones possess comes well to the fore; and some of the productions of cadets are fit to rank with those of skilled workmen. It would be difficult to exaggerate the value of this mode of recreation, or of that of photography, which is also taught to those who care to learn it, and to which the engraving accompanying this paper is owing. Of latter years many of the old customs of the Academy have begun to die out,

and soon, no doubt, they will be things of the past. Of late, too, the authorities have thought it advisable to add another wing to the building, with the intention of giving every cadet a room to himself. When that is accomplished, the old traditions will fade away very fast indeed. It may be better so, and certainly it will tend much to the comfort of the last-joined ; but whether the present age is not one that is too fond of comfort, and has too small regard to the good effect of a little

'roughing it' upon most dispositions, is, I think, more than doubtful. Some of us will be sorry for the old days, however, no matter what the new ones are like, though perhaps few who talk of the 'good old times' would like to go back to them. If I have given my readers the idea that, at least in the present customs of the Academy, there is no actual harm or unkindness, and a good deal of real common sense, though clad in a somewhat ludicrous garb, I shall be quite satisfied.



ON THE THREE-CORNERED WAY OF LOOKING AT THINGS.

ONE is often met with the remark, more just than such epigrammatic remarks are apt to be, that every man is a philosopher, every woman an actress. Without entering into the second limb of this classification, which opens up a bewildering subject for contemplation, we limit ourselves to the philosophising tendency of the human animal. As fast as a man accumulates the facts of experience, he argues on them, classifies them, formulates them into laws. The facts of human life and feeling are as much facts as any of those on which scientific systems are built up. It will be found that any philosophy of human life is essentially three-cornered; that is to say, that human life readily lends itself to one of three methods of contemplation and practice. A great deal may be said for each of these views. Each has its distinct school of disciples; and very often the same man has passed through

these three different schools. It will be recollected how Mr. Gladstone, in going through that process of thinking upon his legs which so often describes the character of his oratory, generally points out that there are three courses which are open, and then proceeds to argue in favour of one of those courses, giving it a distinct preference. I propose to follow, *haud passibus æquis*, the great Gladstonian precedent. Every philosopher, that is to say every man, naturally takes an optimistic or a pessimistic view of human life. There is, however, a third and more excellent way, a truer and more philosophical way as it seems to me, which will not force facts into the groove of a theory; but accepting them for what they are and for what they are worth, and arbitrating between the two conflicting theories, will strike out a third view of a cheerful and more Christian-like character.

If we look at the way in which different people regard different events, these tendencies will come out more clearly. A man is taken ill. The pessimist at once concludes that he will never get better; and the optimist, though grave symptoms may be developed, never entertains the idea that things may go wrong with him. They transfer similar trains of reasons to the cases of their friends. A man drops into a fortune. The optimist, who, as a rule, is a very good kind of fellow, thinks that his friend has now a chance and a career. The pessimist declares that this is the only thing that was wanting to complete his physical and moral ruin. The pessimist entertains the gloomiest views of the state and prospects of society. It is going to the bad, to the dogs, to the devil. The optimist looks forward to the time when gaols and hospitals and workhouses will not be wanted; when moral and intellectual failure will be unknown; when the human subject, healthy and long lived, will blossom into the incomparable Osiris. If a man be ever so wicked, committing all the deadly sins at a terrible rate, the optimist, like his amiable prototype Charles Lamb, will only lament that he should be such an 'eccentric character.' Whereas the pessimist, should any unoffending person tread on his mental, pedal, or political corns, denounces him as a ruffian, an insupportable rascal, a destructive, a blackguard, and would wish to sweep him from his path like an avalanche. How often in domestic life do we see the father fretful and presageful of evil, doubtful for himself and doubtful for the children, while the optimist good mother throws the rainbow of promise over the future of her boys and girls! At least my

friends let us have the privilege of hoping. Let us hold our judgments in suspense, our opinions in solution; let us make allowances, take broad views of things, be kindly and charitable; but at the same time avoid 'the falsehood of extremes.'

Now your regular optimist is not quite the sort of man that one really cares for. As a rule he is a smug kind of Philistine. Heaven may be all very well in its way; but he asks for no better heaven than his own 'diggings,' of course with some addition thereto in the way of money or money's worth. He is like the fine lady who thought that heaven would be 'just like the London season, only pleasanter, because there would be no bores.' He is perfectly satisfied with everything. He never denies himself anything. He himself essentially belongs to 'the sty of Epicurus.' It never occurs to him that there is any place for improvement in himself or his belongings. Fed up to the eyelids himself, it is no care to him that there are other people all otherwise than so well off. Perfectly satisfied in his own small nature, he reckes nothing of any 'hunger of the heart' that may be the case with others. Of course such a man in an unmodified form is conceited and ignorant and stupid.

Let it be granted, however, that there is an optimism which rises to a higher strain than this—a spiritual and not a carnal optimism. Some people really believe that everything really happens to them for the best. If a man breaks his leg, for instance, he will argue that this is all for the best. As a case in point, there is good Bernard Gilpin, who was summoned up to London to answer respecting diverse matters which came unpleasantly under the statute *De heretico comburendo*.

On his way he broke his leg, which he took very cheerfully, feeling quite sure that it was all for the best. And, in fact, Mary died and Elizabeth succeeded in those days, and his life was saved. And your thorough-going optimist has an extremely pleasant theory that everything is for the best, and that he would not disturb anything on any account. Now I am quite willing to allow that there may be a 'soul of good in things evil,' and that a divine alchemy may extract blessed results from evil conditions. Still, how can one say that there is any positive result of good in the aspect of vice, misery, and ignorance around us? One might as well extract sunshine from cucumbers as consolation from such evils. The object must be as speedily and thoroughly as possible to modify or extirpate the evil. That is a bad kind of optimism which is content to leave things as they are. But I go in for what medical men call 'conservatory surgery.' If there is anything worth keeping, let it be kept. Do not be in a hurry to amputate the limb if there is a chance of healing the wound. But, at the same time, if there be this great hurt and harm, I cannot indorse the stoical dogma that the pain is no evil. If a man has lost his front tooth, or has been a shareholder in the Glasgow Bank, or has broken his collar-bone, or been rejected by the woman he really loves, that seems to me an unnatural kind of optimism that takes it all for the best. At least, such an opinion has to be argued on supernatural, and not on natural, ground. Such evils may be overruled for good, but such things are not good in themselves. They may happen, as Plato says, neither with nor yet without a Providence—*οἷδε μὲν αἶδη ἀνυθιστῶν*. The true

optimism lies, not in believing that all things are best, but in making the best of all things. What wonderful instances of this has our House of Commons afforded in such men as Mr. Fawcett and Mr. Kavanagh! A life may be maimed in more ways than by a bodily evil. But in whatever way the maim and injury may come, a man should still consider that life is a supremely good gift, and accept it in the way that it comes to him, resolved to live courteously and bravely; and though he cannot so far hoodwink his reason as to call things by wrong names, as far as this world goes, yet he may think that 'behind the veil,' could he only penetrate it, there may be a higher reason for things to which he cannot as yet attain.

It is like going from the cheerful sunshine into a vault to examine the pessimistic corner of the philosophy of life. No doubt there are at times veins of the deepest sadness in the sensitive human spirit. Those lines of Tennyson's,

'Tears, idle tears, I know not what they
mean,
Sprung from the depths of some divine
despair,'

are fraught with meaning to so many of us. I suppose that there is no heart, no life that has been always free from this bleak shadow of despair. I often think over Carlyle's words: 'When I gazed into those stars, have they not looked down upon me as with pity, like eyes glistening with heavenly tears over the little lot of man?' In these days we have seen pessimism thrown into a positive theory, formally enunciated and supported by the authority of great names. Sophocles of old showed his melancholy irony when he said that it was best of all not to be born, and next best to get quit of life as soon as we could. These famous

words of the great tragedian are the received motto of pessimism. No one can read John Stuart Mill's violent arraignment of the whole course of Nature without seeing that, on the most basal grounds, he is a pessimist. We have the semi-scientific system of Schopenhauer and Hartwig. Then Mr. Sully writes his book on pessimism, and Mr. Mallock seriously argues out the question, Is life worth the living? And then we have the greatest of Italian scholars—as a boy, he wrote Greek which judges could hardly distinguish from Anacreon's—and loftiest of modern Italian poets, Giacomo Leopardi, who has dilated on the misery and hopelessness of human life. 'Perchance Nature will have pity on us,' he writes, 'if there exists anything in heaven or earth that has pity on man.' He writes an epithalamium for his sister, but warns her that her sons must be either cowards or unfortunates. 'Choose them unhappy; between happiness and virtue there yawns an awful gulf.' He describes both his school and himself when he says: 'I like to uncover more and more the misery of mankind and of all creation, to touch it with my own hand, to be seized with a cold shudder while I examine this unhallowed and terrible secret of life.'

There is always a deep vein of sorrow and disappointment, of shadow and drawback, in every human life. One man wrote *miserrimus* on his tomb, and there are many who would not refuse that briefest, saddest, and most significant of epitaphs. Whenever I come to know people whose lot seems most enviable and brilliant, I know that it is only a matter of time, and I shall unexpectedly open some closet-door and discover a skeleton. Once I had the

privilege of knowing somewhat intimately one of the most gifted and famous Englishmen of our day. He had achieved an amount of fame and fortune far beyond his hopes. But there were black shadows which gathered around him. He seemed to despair of the prospects both of Christianity and of society. His main difficulties and unhappiness arose from his moral and intellectual speculations. It was clear that his prevailing mood was melancholy. I shall never forget the almost frightful earnestness with which he told me one day he wished he had never been born. And, indeed, this has been told me again and again by persons who, as it seemed to me, had especial reasons to be grateful for their creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life. 'And what is your drawback?' I said to a friend who had shown me over his splendid picture-gallery, and lavished princely hospitality on me. 'I have a drawback,' he answered gravely, and he told me one of the saddest stories to which I have ever listened. And now it is a constant formula of mine to inquire, if such an inquiry may be permitted, what is the shadow, the blight, the drawback, the fatal element in so many lives, if not in every human life.

That discontent which heightens and darkens every misfortune fosters pessimism and finally despair. I am afraid that there is more despair in the world than most of us think of. The morning papers have always some terrible suggestions on this head in their paragraphs. Now, of all things that can happen, despair is the direst and the very foolishhest. It is the final outcome of pessimism. 'Never despair,' said Burke; 'and if you do, work in despair.' Sometimes the theory is developed into very awful practice. It is very

curious to look at the different ways in which Greeks and Romans regarded the subject of stoicism. The Greeks argued about things, while the Romans simply did them. The Greeks argued the question generally, but the Romans opened a vein and plunged into the bath. Unfortunately there is always a heavy average of suicides: never more than in these days of unrest and excitement. Going over a large county lunatic asylum, the medical director told me that the main cause of insanity was neither love nor religion, as people might suppose, but worry about business, and money troubles. They think that they might get out of this troublesome world by the simple method of taking a few drops of prussic-acid. There was once a vulgar song, which I believe had its origin in one of the transpontine theatres:

'Prussic-acid, prussic-acid,
Down my throat I'll quickly tuck it,
For I never shall have rest
Until I have kicked the bucket.'

This world may be troublesome, but it is quite possible that there is something worse behind it. The French have a theory that death wipes away dishonour. In Dumas's *Monte Cristo*, the estimable Marseilles merchant and his son agree that, as they cannot meet their business bills, the proper thing to do is that the fathers should commit suicide. I do not think that this would be much consolation to the creditors. I am reminded that the worst that can happen is that a man should have to go to the workhouse. Now the workhouse is not such a very bad sort of place. There are many that are worse. I make a point of going everywhere, and among other places I have repeatedly visited a workhouse. As I have seen the old men take their cocoa

or skilly, smoke their pipes, and read the penny paper, well clothed and comfortably housed, it has occurred to me that a man might be worse off than in a workhouse. It is astonishing how cheerful people can make themselves even under the most desperate conditions. I have just been reading a book in which a gentleman, who has previously given the public an account of convict prisons, describes his earlier experiences in Whitecross-street and the Queen's Bench. Here is his description of a breakfast-party: 'Stewed kidneys, broiled bacon, boiled eggs, and kippered herrings formed the hot dishes. Knuckle of ham, the remains of a brace of grouse, and a standing Lincolnshire pork-pie were ready, cold, to support them in furnishing us with a good meal; while coffee, tea, claret, and bottled Bass afforded ample choice of fluid to wash it down.' But as a matter of fact, my dear general reader, you are not really afraid of coming to the workhouse. It is the sort of thing which you can prophesy to your son when he is going ahead with his expenditure, or tell your wife when she has got through her last cheque too quickly.

Concerning those wretched people who really do give up in despair, I have repeatedly noticed that good was on the way to them if they had only waited a little longer. Lord Lytton has pointed out that just when Chatterton destroyed himself in despair, influential people were inquiring about him, and were coming to his rescue. I saw a paragraph quite lately in the *Times* to the effect that a man had destroyed himself for fear of coming to want, and all the time a large legacy was lying ready for him. And the other day there was the case of the poor

fellow whose post-office order for fifteen shillings arrived just a post too late. So necessary is it that we should exercise patience, and never surrender the privilege of immortal hope. The poet never wrote a truer line than 'Hope springs eternal in the human breast.' It struggles through despondency like gleams of sunshine on the wild March days. There is an amiable inconsistency about those pessimists. Just as we have sometimes seen a smile lurking on a woebegone countenance, so pessimism is sometimes betrayed out of its black bile. Just so we have heard the story, whether true or not we do not profess to say, of a man who wrote a book to prove that the end of the world was come, and took a lease of his house for twenty years on the proceeds. We find even Leopardi writing in his early days: 'My wish is to soar and to become great and immortal by genius and by study—an enterprise arduous, and perhaps for me visionary; but man must not be faint-hearted nor despair of himself.' It must be acknowledged, however, that this is by no means the general tone of his writings, amidst his repellent home surroundings, and by the side of an uncongenial parent.

I have come to the commonplace, but also to the common-sense, conclusion, that, on the whole, cheerfulness is the right corner to lay hold by. 'Serve God and be cheerful,' was the motto of holy Bishop Hacket. 'Cheerfulness is a hymn of praise to God' is a true saying. 'I pray thee, dear wife, be merry in God,' wrote Sir Thomas More on the eve of his execution. I do not deny that there may be a great deal to be said both for the optimistic and the pessimistic views of things; and I suppose that

the truly philosophical thing would be to strike the balance and to steer for a *via media*. But I am conscious that I lean very decidedly to one side. I lean more to the optimist side than to the pessimist. The apex of the three-cornered view shall be crowned and happy with this idea of cheerfulness. I cannot, with the conflict and tragedy and sorrow that are around us, believe that this is really the best of all possible worlds. Yet if things are not for the best, we may yet make the best of them. I cannot sympathise with those who, if they can keep their snug homes and snug incomes, ask no other heaven. But still less can I indorse this pestilential pessimist theory. But whatever the sorrows of life, I indorse the words of our grand poetess:

'I thank Thee while my days go on,
I bless Thee while my days go on;
Through dark and dread, through fire
and frost,
With emptied arms and treasure lost,
I thank Thee while my days go on.'

The cloud may not lift from the human life, but there may be something cheerful beyond the cloud. This too was the tranquil serene philosophy of one of the profoundest of English poets—I mean Wordsworth; and I think it is a sign of good that at our universities Wordsworth is now the poet most deeply studied and keenly appreciated. He says:

'Neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish
men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith that all which we
behold
Is full of blessings.'

Yes, that is by far the wisest as well as the happiest way of looking at things. It will be found that the three-cornered theory really exhausts all the

possible philosophies of practical human life. And these theories, though coming up as new ideas and with a new terminology, are in reality as old as the hills. The optimist and the pessimist are just our old friends the laughing and the crying philosopher over again. Either character has always seemed to me a little absurd. He is cruel to laugh while 'the still small music of humanity' is in his ears. 'Respect the burden, madam,' said Napoleon to a lady who was somewhat scornful towards a poor man carrying a load uphill. We cannot indulge in the laughter of fools while we recognise everywhere 'the burden and heat of the day.' Still less can we indulge in idle tears when we recognise the glories of the hopes for the race and for the individuals. You must needs philoso-

phise, my brother, and you had better get hold of the right corner in your philosophy. Play with your children and make love to your wife. Remember Lord Melbourne's advice to a dullard friend, as they were returning late home through the streets, that he might at least have amused himself by seeing the light flashed from the backs of the lobsters in the fishmongers' shops. Learn that in all Nature, from the star to the stone, there is instruction. Keep both your conscience and your digestion in thoroughly good order. Be hopeful; make allowances; put yourself in other people's places; avoid both the stoical and epicurean extremes; be neither sinner nor Pharisee, and you have secured the safest and pleasantest prong of our three-horned dilemma.



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